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# MODERN LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

March, 1943

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## **MODERN LANGUAGE QUARTERLY**

Edited by

**EDWARD GODFREY COX**

*Managing Editor*

**DUDLEY D. GRIFFITH**

**CURTIS C. D. VAIL**

**HOWARD LEE NOSTRAND**

*Direct Contributions and Business Correspondence to  
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## RILKE IN HIS LETTERS TO RODIN

By H. F. PETERS

On June 28, 1902, Rilke wrote the first letter to Rodin commencing a correspondence which he carried on with fair regularity until May 13, 1913. In the course of these eleven years he wrote ninety-four letters to the French sculptor, which are deposited today at the Musée Rodin in Paris. Rodin's answers — apart from three which Rilke copied for his wife, Clara<sup>1</sup> — are missing. They were among Rilke's possessions auctioned in Paris during the last war and have not been forthcoming since. However, I have not been able to find definite proof that they have been destroyed. There is, therefore, a chance that they may re-appear some day.<sup>2</sup> In 1928 the Inselverlag, Leipzig, published an edition, limited to 420 copies, of Rilke's letters to Rodin based on the Parisian manuscripts in which only some linguistic errors of the poet's have been corrected. This edition forms the text for the present study.

The introductory letter is characteristic in more than one sense of the tone that prevails throughout the correspondence: its style is high-flown, in parts even flowery; it abounds in admiration for Rodin's art; it betrays already that over-indulgence in adulation which in some letters strikes the reader as somewhat naive; for example, when Rilke says "the occasion to write about your work is for me an inner vocation, a feast, a joy, a great and noble task towards which turn all my love and all my zeal";<sup>3</sup> or, with reference to his wife's artistic endeavor, "a single word from you, dear Master, will decide her future and without it she will grope forward like a blind woman."<sup>4</sup> And yet, with all its submissive humility, the letter also sounds a tenacious note, a demand for help and for advice so persuasively worded as to make a refusal all but impossible. As Rilke is writing to a complete stranger, this insistence is remarkable. It is all the more remarkable if one considers the relative position of the two artists at that time. Rilke, the almost unknown German poet whose published work, even if Rodin had been able to understand it, would not have greatly impressed him, and

<sup>1</sup> July 20, 1905; Sept. 4, 1905; Sept. 7, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Most Rilke scholars seem to take an *a priori* attitude towards the question of the Rodin letters. They take it for granted that the letters are irretrievably lost; cf. E. M. Butler, *R. M. Rilke* (Cambridge University Press, 1941), p. 143. In a personal letter Prof. Butler admits however that "they [the letters] may turn up somewhere—or they may not" which seems a more correct statement of the facts.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. Rilke, *Briefe an Auguste Rodin* (Leipzig: Insel, 1928), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Rodin who was just then entering into the universal renown which had so long been denied him. When we consider the relationship between Rilke and Rodin we must not forget that we are not dealing with the Rilke of the *Duineser Elegien* or the *Sonette an Orpheus*, but with the Rilke of the early poems, the *Geschichten vom lieben Gott* and of the *Buch der Bilder*.

After informing Rodin that he intends to come to Paris and to write a monograph on Rodin's work, Rilke tells the sculptor that his publisher needs reproductions for the forthcoming volume and asks where he can get them. He also wants to know whether there are any other publications on this subject and asks the artist to let him know the titles, particularly of essays containing biographical details. He then deplores the fact that he missed the Rodin exhibition in Prague and inquires whether any other exhibition is scheduled. Finally, he reminds Rodin that his wife, the sculptress Clara Westhoff, has sent him some examples of her recent work and is now anxiously waiting for an answer.

If one strips the letter of its esthetic rhetoric, a cruel, but in Rilke's case a necessary, operation, one finds: First, he takes it for granted that Rodin approves of his intention to write his monograph, for on that point he has nothing to say. Second, he asks a number of favors which are either difficult to grant or unnecessary. For instance, any good library would have informed him whether there were any publications on Rodin; and what was Rodin to say to someone who asked for reproductions to be published in a book which had not even been started? Third, he reminds the sculptor, very politely to be sure, of Clara's letter, intimating that it is about time for Rodin's reply. "She sent you (two months ago) some copies of her recent work and is now waiting (I can feel it) anxiously and impatiently for an answer."<sup>5</sup>

Rilke's solicitations on his wife's behalf run like a red thread through the correspondence and are at least partly responsible for its vagarious course. Until we have more specific information about Rodin's attitude to his other pupils<sup>6</sup> we can only guess about his feelings for his one-time student Clara Westhoff, but it is safe to say that he looked at her work with no more than benevolent neutrality. Rilke constantly tried to make him see what he did not see himself and that naturally caused irritation. Professor Butler's statement that "one cannot altogether absolve Rilke from the charge

<sup>5</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Rilke quotes him as saying "my pupils think they must overcome me, they must surpass me. They are against me. Nobody helps me." (Sept. 27, 1905.)

of trading on his friendship with Rodin"<sup>7</sup> certainly goes too far, if it means to imply that Rilke consciously used his friendship with Rodin to further Clara's ends. Unconsciously, however, he certainly did so.

The main impression one receives from these early letters is the almost religious adoration with which Rilke approached Rodin. It is clear from his own words that he had not seen much of Rodin's work before he wrote to him, indeed it is questionable whether he knew much more of it than what Clara had told him or what he had seen in reproductions, and yet he writes in his third letter, dated August 1, 1902, "my whole life is changed since I know that you are mon maître."<sup>8</sup> And he goes on to say that it is the fate of young artists to need a strong master: "They do not search for words, nor for instruction, they need an example, an ardent heart, hands that make greatness. They need you."<sup>9</sup> One is reminded of Stefan George's poem *der Jünger*,<sup>10</sup> where one finds a similar almost hysterical expression of master worship, or of Nietzsche's poem to the unknown god. "I wanted to do everything," says Rilke telling Rodin of the Danish poet Jens Peter Jacobsen, "to become worthy of being the humblest of his pupils and the prophet of his heart . . . but I was told that he was dead."<sup>11</sup> In his eagerness to find a living idol he turned to Rodin.

It need not be labored here that it would be difficult to imagine two artists more unlike in every important aspect than the diffident Austrian poet in whose veins Slavonic mysticism mingled freely with a very Teutonic brand of transcendentalism and the stocky, bull-necked French sculptor whose feet, as his art, were so solidly rooted on this earth. In addition to these biological differences, to which of course must be added the difference in age—Rilke was twenty-seven, Rodin sixty-two years old when they first met—there came, as the greatest barrier of all, the difference in language. Rodin spoke no German. Rilke's entire world was therefore closed to him. Rilke's French, on the other hand, was halting; he felt particularly handicapped in conversation. That is why he had the urge to write to Rodin even when he lived near him. "Always with you I feel the imperfection of my language like an illness which separates me from you, even in moments when I am quite near."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>8</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> It is significant that Rilke, whose antipathy to George's poetry was notorious, copied this poem in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé, Oct. 21, 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10 f.

Rilke's struggle to overcome these differences and to break into the confines of Rodin's artistic consciousness does not lack the heroic. The Master does not understand German? Very well, he would express his poetic inspirations in French, no matter how difficult he finds that language. In the same letter in which he says that his imperfect mastery of French separates him from Rodin like an illness, he encloses a French poem which he has written; not because he thinks that it is a good poem, but because he wants to get closer to Rodin, just as he gives him copies of his German poems "in order that some of his confessions may be near the master." And he confides: "It is not only to write about your work that I have come to you—it is to ask you: how must one live? And you have answered: by working"; rhapsodically he continues "thus you have given me the great renaissance of my life."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless he manages to slip in a more realistic note by informing Rodin of his financial worries and asking him to help Clara, if he should find it impossible to earn a living in Paris. The peculiar flavor of these letters is precisely their mixture of idealistic adulation and quite realistic demands for favors—now for an introductory letter, now for advice, now for a testimonial, now for a loan—expressed in such mellifluous language that it was difficult for Rodin to say no. In short, Rilke appears in these letters as a very ardent advocate of Rodin, but also as a very skillful pleader of his own case and of Clara's.

Following the course of the correspondence over the period of eleven years, it becomes clear that it went through three different stages. The first stage shows Rilke as the young worshipper who approaches his hero with awe, but also with the determination not to let go until he be blessed. The second shows him as Rodin's prophet, and intimate. The third as Rodin's friend. Between the second and third lies that sudden angry outburst of Rodin's when he drove Rilke away, temporarily, from his intimacy. But it was not Rilke who suffered. Rodin soon realized that he had wronged one of his most devoted disciples and tried to make amends. Only towards the close of the third stage does the relationship once again revert to what it had been at the beginning. The result was another break which became final on account of the war. The first stage extends from June 28, 1902, to June 23, 1903, and contains thirteen letters. The second from June 22, 1904, to May 12, 1906, with eighteen letters. The last stage from November 3, 1907, to May 13, 1913, contains sixty-three letters. The bulk of the correspondence thus falls in the third phase.

<sup>13</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

There is a marked difference in style between the letters written in the first two periods and those of the last. The latter are for the most part free from esthetic rhetoric. The exaggerated flattery of the earlier letters has given place to a more solid appraisal of Rodin's achievements. Rilke is no longer the blind follower who lies prostrate before his master. He still admires, but his admiration is no longer boundless. Occasionally he even disagrees with Rodin, particularly on the subject of love, and argues his case fearlessly;<sup>14</sup> or he says that Rodin's and his own joy of artistic creation differ only in degree.<sup>15</sup> Most characteristic perhaps for this latter phase is the changed form of address. Rilke no longer writes to the "honored or much honored Master" but quite simply to "my dear Rodin" or "my dear friend."

Intervals of twelve and eighteen months respectively mark the caesuras in the correspondence. Rodin appears to be responsible for both, but one cannot help feeling that Rilke's clinging—Miss Butler uses the term leech-like<sup>16</sup>—must have been disconcerting at times. The reason for the first break may have been the letter which Rilke wrote Rodin on June 23, 1903, in which he informs the sculptor that both Clara and himself are about to leave Paris and would like to have Rodin visit them before they go. This wish is coupled with a number of requests: Rodin is asked to look at Clara's recent work, to listen to Rilke's poetry—"quoique en allemand," as he adds ingeniously in parentheses—and to write a short testimonial which Clara needed to support her application for an art scholarship with the Bremen senate. Looking at these requests objectively one would say that they were harmless enough, considering that Rilke had just written such a rhapsodic account of Rodin's work. And it was perhaps not so much the nature of the request as the way in which it was put that upset the sculptor. It was wrapped up in a haze of esoteric flattery: "If you grant us this wish you will give us much more than a memory for the rest of our lives,—by coming to us you will bless us and one moment of your presence will penetrate us like a great force. But we are far from insisting on this favor. Only if you should happen to pass le quartier du Lion de Belfort . . . we ask you to remember that you can make us happy by staying with us one single minute. Otherwise, if you would like to fix a meeting, I should feel honored to fetch you by carriage so that you need not search for the studio."<sup>17</sup> Whichever way Rodin turned, Rilke's zeal had the answer ready. It was

<sup>14</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>16</sup> Butler, p. 163.

<sup>17</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

surely impossible to refuse a request so humbly and yet so persuasively presented. Did Rodin refuse it? We do not know. All we can tell by the Rilke-Rodin correspondence is that here lies the first gap. A year passes before Rilke again writes to his idol. To other correspondents he explains that Paris had become unbearable. In a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé to whom he usually confided his innermost feelings and whom he gave a detailed account of the impression made on him by Rodin, Rilke indeed says that they are now planning to go to Rome where "according to Rodin's wish"<sup>18</sup> Clara was to work for the following two years. This, however, does not tally with their joint letter to Rodin after the year's silence, in which they inform the sculptor that they had just returned from Italy "where we have been working during the past year."<sup>19</sup> Nor with the letter which Rilke wrote from Sweden, in which he tells Rodin that they had been in Rome. By way of apologizing for his long silence, he says that they had often wanted to write, but that they had always felt it was better to work, because "the only way that leads us directly to you is work."<sup>20</sup>

It is of course possible that the real reason for this first break in the correspondence was not Rodin's refusal to help them. It may simply have been that Rodin's vigorous example had become too much for the poet and that he felt he needed distance in time and space to fit it into his life's experience. He certainly confesses to Lou Salomé that he suffered from the overpowering example which he could not follow by the means of his art.<sup>21</sup> But whenever he writes to Rodin after this experience, sparingly and always somewhat apologetically for not writing more often, he does so in the spirit of the loyal acolyte "as one addresses a prayer to God."<sup>22</sup> Great was his joy, therefore, when in the middle of July, 1905, Rodin wrote him a short letter, addressed to "my very dear friend"<sup>23</sup> in which he says that Rilke and Clara are two of his best memories. Rilke answers by return mail, tells Rodin that he hopes to be in Paris for ten days in September, and would like to show him something of Clara's recent work.<sup>24</sup> Five weeks pass and Rodin has not answered, so Rilke reminds him of his request in another short letter. This time the answer comes promptly. Rodin sends first a telegram

<sup>18</sup> August 1, 1903.

<sup>19</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> August 10, 1903. Rilke's sudden flight from Paris to Viareggio in March, 1903, was probably caused by the same feeling of inferiority.

<sup>22</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> Copied in letter to Clara, July 20, 1905.

<sup>24</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

and then a letter inviting him to come and stay as his guest at Meudon. The letter written by Rodin's secretary bears the post-script "monsieur Rodin tient à ce que vous restiez chez lui pour pouvoir parler."<sup>25</sup>

The sequence of this fateful invitation: how Rilke accepted it, how he became in turn first Rodin's house-guest, then his assistant in art matters, and finally a sort of private secretary in charge of Rodin's correspondence, is well known, although there would seem to be some confusion about the exact nature of Rilke's work. The rough and ready way of calling him Rodin's secretary hardly describes their relationship, as I have pointed out elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> After seven months of intimate collaboration Rodin dismissed Rilke as suddenly as he had called him. The only letter that throws any light on the mysterious dismissal is the one Rilke wrote immediately after the event. It is a long, well-reasoned exposition of his case, dignified and without resentment, "a model of what such a letter should be."<sup>27</sup> Rilke's main argument is that he came to Rodin as a friend and that even the function into which he entered a few weeks later was that of a friend helping a friend. It had been, he says, his ardent wish to enter into Rodin's confidence to such a degree that he would be able to know the master's decisions in advance and without having to be told. The moment when these efforts were misunderstood, or when his motives became suspect, he would have all the appearances against him. This is what had happened and what hurt him profoundly. But he understands Rodin even when the master wrongs him, for, he continues proudly, "I am convinced that there is nobody of my age (neither in France nor elsewhere) who is able to understand you as well as I understand you."<sup>28</sup> His only regret is that his wife, who has not offended Rodin, should suffer from his disgrace. Why did the master not think of her (who needs him so badly) when he dismissed him? The letter ends on a particularly noble note: "We are agreed that there is an immanent justice in life which works slowly but without fail. It is in this justice that I set all my hope; it will correct one day the wrong that you have seen fit to impose on someone who has no longer the means nor the right to show you his heart."<sup>29</sup> The letter is signed Rilke and bears the postscript "I shall tell my relatives and my friends . . . that I have left you in order to put all my strength into my own work." He does not want the world

<sup>25</sup> Copied in letter to Clara, Sept. 4, 1905.

<sup>26</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, LVII (Jan., 1942), p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Butler, p. 165.

<sup>28</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

to know the painful scene that had taken place in Meudon. As far as we can judge by his published correspondence, he kept his word.

The breach occurred in May, 1906. Eighteen months later the correspondence continues with a long letter which Rilke wrote in reply to an inquiry from Rodin about an exhibition of the sculptor's drawings in Vienna. Only in one passage, where Rilke tells Rodin that the editor of the art journal *Kunst und Künstler* had approached him a little previously with the request to obtain Rodin's permission for the reproduction of the sculptor's drawing, the *Cambodian dancers*, only here do we find a hint of the misunderstanding that had arisen between them. For Rilke says "not daring to write to you, I have had to tell Mr. Scheffler to my great regret that I could not approach you in that matter, although it was very close to my heart. But now that you have given me permission to write to you, I submit it . . . to your deliberation."<sup>30</sup> Rodin was obviously touched by Rilke's letter, for he writes again almost by return mail warmly inviting the poet to come and see him when he is in Paris. "Nous avons besoin de la vérité, de la poésie tous deux et d'amitié."<sup>31</sup> Rilke, of course, is overjoyed. "Alles ist wieder gut," he exclaims in a letter to Clara. "Der Liebe, Gerechte, der die Dinge so ehrlich lebt von seiner Arbeit aus! Der Gerechte."<sup>32</sup> Their former intimacy is re-established, but this time on a basis of true equality. Rodin at last understands the artist in Rilke.

It is therefore no coincidence that the year 1908 which for Rilke was rich in artistic achievement—he was so absorbed in his work on the *Malte Laurids Brigge* and on the *Neue Gedichte* that he denied himself even to Rodin at times—was also the richest in their friendship. In this one year Rilke sent no less than thirty letters, telegrams, and short notes to the sculptor who for part of the time was his neighbor in the same building, 77, rue de Varenne. These letters are of course unequal in content and merit, but some of them belong to the best he ever wrote. Especially noteworthy are his account of *Toledo* by El Greco in a letter written on October 16, 1908; his description of Rodin's drawings in a particularly fine letter of October 21, 1908; the short but noble note that accompanies his gift, the *Neue Gedichte*, the second part of which is dedicated to Rodin, November 8, 1908; and the New Year's letter written on December 29, 1908.

The year 1909 opens with a letter that augurs badly for their friendship. On January 15 Rilke tells Rodin that he is financially embarrassed and asks for a loan of 400 francs. Three days later

<sup>30</sup> Rilke, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> Copied in letter to Clara, November 11, 1907.

<sup>32</sup> Letter to Clara, November 11, 1907.

he himself withdraws the request for fear, as he says, of again entering into a situation that in the past had created their misunderstanding. The incident is forgotten, but Rodin himself causes disappointment to his friends by the way in which he falls victim to the advances of the Duchess of Choiseul. Rilke, particularly, must have been shocked to see the moral disintegration of his great friend, for as such it appeared to him. At first, indeed, he tries to understand; "perhaps," he writes to Clara, "Rodin now needs someone who can lead him down, carefully and a little childishly, from the peaks on which he always strays. Formerly he remained up there, and God knows, how and whither and through what night he finally returned."<sup>83</sup> But gradually his disappointment grows and the correspondence subsides in like measure. The thirty letters in 1908 are followed by but eleven in 1909 and eight in 1910. And there is another large gap between October 7, 1910, and December 30, 1911. It foreshadowed the final break.

The reason, as we have seen, lay in the increasing emotional tension from which both artists suffered at that time. Rodin had to conquer his tragic passion and Rilke, after having finished the *Malte*, found himself in a state of utter spiritual exhaustion "like Raskolnikow after the deed,"<sup>84</sup> which made him irritable with himself and intolerant to others. In such a mood he confessed to Lou Salomé that "Rodin in his seventieth year simply put himself in the wrong."<sup>85</sup> However, the estrangement passed, and two days after he had written the above, he addressed to Rodin a very friendly New Year's letter. Nevertheless something had been destroyed. Rodin probably felt that the admiration of his former disciple had given place to pity, and he reacted, as he always did when he was irritated, by becoming erratic. One day he showered Rilke with favors of all sorts, sent him photographs of his work, agreed to sit for Clara, accepted Rilke's advice on his dealings with German art collectors, and the next day he withdrew everything. But Rilke is undaunted. Despite rebuffs he continues writing to Rodin, pleading, expostulating, explaining. And outwardly the correspondence ends very much as it had begun eleven years before. Rilke thanks Rodin for a "truly sublime morning" which he and Clara had enjoyed in the old master's company. At the same time he asks another favor: again he needs reproductions for a new edition of his book on Rodin and he also wants to introduce his friend, the publisher Kippenberg. Whether or not this caused the final rupture

<sup>83</sup> Letter to Clara, November 3, 1909.

<sup>84</sup> Letter to Countess Lili Kanitz-Menar, September 7, 1910.

<sup>85</sup> Letter to Lou Salomé, December 28, 1911.

(about which the correspondence is silent), as Miss Butler says in her account of the Rilke-Rodin drama,<sup>86</sup> or whether a sudden chauvinistic impulse in Rodin is responsible, as the editors of the Rilke letters indicate,<sup>87</sup> may be left unanswered.

We can say, however, that on January 27, 1914, Rilke explains in a letter to Frau von Nostiz that his relationship to Rodin had become "unhappy and barren measured by the immense necessity from which it had flowed formerly" and admits that it is either cowardice or caution on his part which prevents him from revisiting familiar places or streets, living as he does "on such a narrow margin of inner balance." This revealing confession seems to me to offer a much better explanation for the final break in the Rilke-Rodin friendship than any incident. Incidents there had been between the two artists in the past, as was to be expected, and they had caused friction and temporary breaks. But by 1912 the friendship had become barren, for artistically both Rilke and Rodin were at dead ends, and humanly they never had very much in common. That is a problem, however, which deserves far more minute examination than we can give it here, and it transcends the limits of correspondence. But before a complete picture can be drawn we need much more material on Rodin. Recent Rilke research has elucidated many problems (though by no means all) concerning the life and work of the Austrian poet. The same cannot be said of Rodin. This great French sculptor is still waiting for his scholarly biographer and for an editor of his personal papers.

*Reed College*

<sup>86</sup> Butler, p. 232.

<sup>87</sup> R. M. Rilke, *Briefe aus den Jahren, 1907-14* (Leipzig, 1933) note to letter no. 125.

## A VARIANT OF THE HOFMANNSWALDAU ANTHOLOGY

By C. GRANT LOOMIS

The problems presented by the anthologies of poetry which were issued under the name of Christian Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau, beginning in 1695 and continuing into the second half of the next century, have not all been solved, nor are they likely to be until some scholar has gathered all the variant editions and compared them. A. Hübscher has made the most complete survey to the present time.<sup>1</sup> At least one item, although known to him, does not seem to have come to his hand. The arrangement and chronology of the first four volumes may stand probably without serious alterations. Part V offers difficulties.<sup>2</sup> Two traditions seem to exist concerning its arrangement. Two different editors were engaged in its compilation, and their selections differ widely. One editor, the mysterious C. H., was responsible for what may be called the standard redaction of part IV. He also selected the uncommon anthology of a fifth part, an item which is scarce in the book world. The material in the most familiar fifth part is safely to be attributed to Gottlieb Stolle (Leander aus Schlesien), a selection of whose poems makes up the last part of this volume (pp. 222-317 in the edition of 1734). An examination of the C. H. compilation for part V revealed the following variations:<sup>3</sup> A nucleus of 143 poems (including *Sinngedichte*) is

<sup>1</sup> "Die Dichter der Neukirch'schen Sammlung," *Euphorion*, XXIV, 1-28, 259-287; XXVI, 279.

<sup>2</sup> See his arrangement of editions, p. 4. The first edition of part V is projected as X (1705?). Hübscher explains this assumption: Die Ausgabe Teil V 1710 dürfte kaum vorausdatiert, d.h. etwa gleichzeitig mit der Erstausgabe Teil VI 1709 herausgebracht worden sein, nachdem ihr terminus post quem der 17. April 1709 ist von dem das Gedicht S. 159 datiert. Da es aber unwahrscheinlich ist, daß die Erstausgabe des V. Teils später erschien als die des VI., so können wir annehmen, daß sie schon einige Jahre vor 1710 herauskam, natürlich noch nicht mit dem vollen Inhalt der späteren uns vorliegenden Drucke. Einen sicheren Beweis für diese Erstausgabe X bietet uns das Vorhandensein eines höchst seltenen, in der Redaktion vielfach abweichenden Nachdrucks der N.S. unter dem Titel: "Herrn von Hoffmannswaldau und ander Schlesien bisher noch nie zusammengedruckten Gedichte 5 Thle." dessen Teil I-IV 1704, Teil V 1705 erschien. Herausgeber war C.H. wie die Dedikation des 1. Teiles zeigt (vgl. hiezu Hayn-Gotendorf, Bibl. Erotica). X dürfte also 1704 oder 1705 fallen.

<sup>3</sup> Parts IV and V, bound together, are part of a set belonging to the library of Karl Weinhold which is now at the University of California. Part I, 1797, is probably a second or third impression; II, 1797, III, 1703, and VI, 1709, may well be first impressions. A check of part IV reveals that it contains the same material which was indicated as redaction I (1708) by Hübscher.

the same in both collections. The Stolle compilation has forty-four poems which do not appear in C. H.'s collection, in addition to the whole group of poems by Leander aus Schlesien. It may be noted that Stolle is not represented at all in the C. H. anthology, but that most of the poems ascribed to C. H. do appear in Stolle's. The additional signed poems in C. H. are as follows:

Its title page reads: Herrn/ von Hoffmannswaldau (*red*)/ und ander Deutschen/ auserlesener/ und bißher noch nie zusammen gedruckter/ Gedichte (*red with black ornamental first initials*)/ Vierdter Theil/ (*vignette of two umbels hanging and joined by scrolls*)/ Glückstadt/ Verlegts Gotthilff Lehmann/ (*red*)/ Buchhändler/ 1704. Dedication: Dem Wohl-Edlen Herrn/ Herrn David Friedrich Schöneiche/ Juris Utr. C. Three pages, signed C.H., follow, plus two pages of Vorrede an den Leser signed by Der Verleger, and explaining that possible errors were due to the absence of the Verfasser. 378 pages. Register der Sachen, 10 pages. Register, 10 pages, followed by a half page of corrections. Part V has the same title page with the exceptions of the Fünfter Theil, and below the vignette, Glückstadt und Leipzig/ Verlegts Gotthilff Lehman/ (*red*)/ Königlich. privil. Buchhändler./ MDCCV. The dedication runs: Dem Wohlgebohrnen Herrn/ Herrn Sigismund Gladiß/ Erb-Herrn auff Groß- und Wüsten-Dobritsch etc. The dedication of four pages follows: Wohlgebohrner Herr/ Schlesien/ welches auch bey denen unpartheyischen Ausländern/ wegen der Poesie/ nicht ohne Ruhm bekannter worden/ kan dieses billich zu seinem größten Glückseligkeiten rechnen/ daß es unter den Vorstehern dieser itzgedachten Eigenschaft auch viel vornehme Stands-Personen aufzuführen vermag. Ich könnte Fürstliche Nahmen nennen/ wenn ich nicht befürchtete/ daß deren unsterblches Andencken durch diese Blätter entweihet würde/ die nebst dem hohen Stande einen noch höhern Verstand der Welt zuerkennen gegeben. Ja/ ich könnte meinem Ausspruche einen Grund/ diesen Zeilen aber einen ungemeinen Glantz zuwege bringen/ wenn ich die/ ohnedem bekannte/ Nahmen des Herrn von Hoffmannswaldau/ Herrn von Lohensteins/ Herrn von Assigs/ und des ohnlangst zwar verstorbenen Freyherrns von Abschatz/ aber fast wieder lebenden in der hohen Persohn des Freyherrns v. H. (this may be a reference to Baron of Hohen-dorf) mit unnöthigen Lobsprüchen hier weitläufiger anzuführen nicht bedencken trüge. Denn/ wie die Sterne auch dem gemeinen Manne; so sind diese Lichter auch dem kleinsten unter den Gelehrten längst bekannt worden/ so daß man nicht erst bey der fama ihre silberne Trompete/ selbe auszublasen; noch ihren stählernen Wagen/ selbe herum zuführen und sie zu verewigen/ ausbitten darf.

Wohlgebohrner Herr/ Dero Nahmen kan ich nun mit dem besten Rechte gedachten Stands-Persohnen an die Seite setzen/ weil sie nebst den andern Theilen der Galanten und Stands-Persohnen höchstanständigen Gelehrsamkeit auch der vorgedachten Poesie ein so gnädiges Auge gönnen/ daß ihm Schlesien von Ihnen künftig nicht allein einen großen Patron dieses manirlichen Zeitvertreibs/ sondern nebst den Eigenschaften eines gelehrt Edelmannes auch einen Nachfolger obengedachter Häupter sicherlich versprechen kan. Dann/ ie seltzamer die vortrefflichsten Edelsteine/ vor desto kostlicher werden sie gehalten; und ie ungemeiner itz gelehrt Stands-Persohnen/ desto höher werden solche geschätzt/ weil der Verstand dem Stande ein sehr großes Ansehen zu wege bringet. Diese Neigung nun/ Wohlgebohrner Herr/ hat mich so kühne gemacht/ daß Ihnen gegenwärtige Blätter als eigen zu überreichen/ ich itzund mich unterstehe/ weil ich versichert bin/ daß Sie dieses nicht gäntzlich verachten/ sondern noch wohl einen gnädigen Blick ihrer galanten Conduite nach ertheilen werden. Verdienen nicht alle deroselben gnädigen Beyfall/ so werden doch etliche vielleicht dieses Glücke haben/ und damit die andern Blätter desto gefälliger machen/ weil man

V. A. = Dr. Valentin Alberti. The last name is usually given in full. Since he died in 1697 and has no record as a poet, C. H. seems to have had available a manuscript collection of his verses, nearly all of the occasional kind. Many of the additional *Sinngedichte*, fifty-two in number (pp. 311-338), belong to him, as well as a greater part of the *Begräbniß-Gedichte* (pp. 178-302). (See Hübscher, pp. 6-7):

311 (2), 312, 313, 314 (2), 315, 316 (2), 317 (3), 318 (3),  
 319 (2), 320 (3), 321 (3), 322 (3), 323 (3), 325 (2), 326, 327 (2),  
 328, 329, 330, 331 (2), 332, 333 (3), 334 (3), 336 (3), 337, 338 (2).  
*Hochzeit-Gedichte*: 88, 100, and 105; 180, 182, 185, 187, 190, 196,  
 202, 205, 208, 210, 213, 215, 217, 220, 227, 230, 235, 240, 243, 245,  
 248, 251, 253, 255, 256, 259, 261, and 271.

\* \* \* = Johann von Besser. (See Hübscher, pp. 7-11.) Both additional poems have no titles; both suggest the French triolet:

Immer einerley  
 Dienet nicht zur löffeley/  
 Und bringt uns die gröste plague;  
 Denn viel länger als zwey tage  
 Ist kein weib dem manne treu/  
 Sonderlich wenn sie noch jung  
 Seuffzt sie nach veränderung.  
 Immer einerley  
 Dienet nicht zur löffeley. (P. 76.)

Sie/ sie bleibt mein vergnügen/  
 Sie/ sie bleibt meine lust;  
 Will sichs gleich itzund nicht fügen/  
 Werd ich mich so lange schmiegen/  
 Biß sie liegt an meiner brust/  
 Sie/ sie bleibt mein vergnügen/  
 Sie/ sie bleibt meine lust. (P. 84.)

D. M. B. = ?. Wittenberg alumnus. (See Hübscher, p. 264.) This author is responsible for two of the five prose selections in the volume, p. 109: Eine Köstliche Perle überreichte An dem Frieß- und Seligmannischen Hochzeit-Tage. D.M.B. Hochschätzbare-Margaris; and Mitleidende Thränen/ An Tit. Hn. Fr. R. S.S. Theol. Candid.

— auch einen Baum/ wegen mehr böser als guter Früchte doch nicht bald zum Feuer zu verdammen pfleget. Vor die meinigen aber wil ich unbesorget leben/ als welche mehr zu Füllung der Bogen/ als Lob dadurch zu erringen/ von mir meistens in Eil verfertiget. Ich überreiche demnach gegenwärtige Gedichte/ wovor ich Dero höchstschatzbare Gnade ferner auszubitten unterstehe. Erhalte ich nur diese/ so hab ich/ was ich wünsche. Wovor ich denn iederzeit mit dem gebührenden respecte verharren werde. Wohlgebohrner Herr/ Dero verpflichtester Diener C.H.

über dem Absterben seiner Frau Mutter/ Fr. A.S. (= Schröer). Two of the *Vermischte Gedichte* are assigned to the same author, pages 360 and 371.

L. R. B. = ?. Three *Sinngedichte*, pp. 344, and 347 (2). (See Hübscher, p. 264.)

S. Dach. Signed in this fashion instead of the usual S. D. With slight variations of text, these poems are all found in Walther Ziesemer's definitive edition: pp. 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 44, 51, 54, 55, 58, 60, 63, 65, 66, 162, 284, 287, 290, 294, 357, 359, 373, 374, 376 and the unnumbered poem after the Register.

S. G. = ?. One *Begräbniß-Gedicht*: Die verdeckte Todes-Frucht/ Bey Tit. Fr. Sophia Helena v. der Sala. P. 172.

C. H. = ?. (See Hübscher, pp. 265-270.) No conclusive evidence of the identity of this author is found in the additional poems. It seems certain he was an alumnus of Wittenberg and a doctor of medicine. Since he is a better poet than many represented in the anthologies, his unnoted poems may bear reproduction:

#### An \* \* \* Schmiedin

Ich bin des langen hoffens müde/  
Und meine sehn sucht foltert mich/  
Drum geh ich vor die rechte schmiede/  
(So nenn ich/ schönste \* \* dich/)  
Und suche da/ wo nicht mein glücke/  
Jedoch mein wiedriges geschicke.

Ich bin der funcken zwar gewohnet/  
Doch wenn ich lange warten muß/  
Eh man die treue mir belohnet/  
So spür ich endlich den verdruß/  
Der heist mich allen liebes-sachen  
Den abschieds-reverentz zu machen. (P. 72.)

#### Das verdrüßliche Lieben

Wer dem lieben  
Sich verschrieben/  
Ist ein unglücks-kind/  
Weil sich sehnen  
Angst und thränen  
Nur in selbem findet.

Alle tage  
Sind zur plague  
Dem/ der liebt/ bestimmt/  
Nacht und morgen  
Bringen sorgen/  
Wenn das feuer glimmt.

Manches schertzen  
Macht dem hertzen  
Folgentlich viel pein/  
Wenn viel triebe  
Dieser liebe  
Gantz zuwieder seyn.

Alles lieben  
Bringt betrüben  
Sorgen/ thränen/ noth.  
Drum so fliehet/  
Was euch ziehet  
In dem frühen tod.

Ihre gütter  
Sind gantz bitter  
Und von myrrhen-art/  
Ihre blicke  
Sind vom glücke  
Thränen zugepaart.

Weg o liebe/  
Deinem triebe  
Bleib ich allzeit feind;  
Weil dein schimmer  
Doch nur immer  
Zum verderben scheint. (P. 76.)

#### Grabschrift

Mein leser lasse dich das lesen nicht verdrüssen/  
(Man wird einmahl von dir auch dieses lesen müssen/)  
In dieser erde liegt die erde in dem grabe/  
Und wünschet/ daß sie dich bald zum gefehrten habe.  
(P. 339.)

#### Das Heyraths-Glücke

Das glücke bringt uns oft ein mägdgen bey der hand/  
Die zwar an güttern reich/ doch blutt-arm an verstand.  
(P. 349.)

F. C. H. = C. H. (?). Als Tit. Hn. D. F. Schöneiche J. U. C. von Wittenberg abreisete, p. 365. C. H. had dedicated part IV to this gentleman. Both the reference to the place as well as medical allusions lend support to this conjecture.

G. W. B. v. H. = Georg Wilhelm (Baron) von Hohendorf. The poem on p. 85 is the same as the one printed in part VI, 144 (1709). (See Hübscher, p. 17.)

G. K. = George Kamper. Pp. 18 (2), and 341. (See Hübscher, p. 18.)

M. D. K. Med. D. = ?. Bey der Mövius- und Hellmannischen Verehligung. P. 97.

F. Ortlob. P. 299. (See Hübscher, p. 271.)

J. G. R. = Johann Georg Richter (?). (See Hübscher, p. 271.) Prose, p. 119.

B. S. = Benjamin Schmolke. P. 160. (See Hübscher, p. 26.)

F. E. W. = ?. Three *Sinngedichte*, pp. 345 (2) and 346. (See Hübscher, p. 273.)

S. W. = ?. Als. Tit. Hn. B. W. Sachs/ Die Academische Studien endigte, p. 362.

Unsigned poems and prose selections as follows:

1. Als Sie seinen Brief mündlich beantwortete. P. 7.

2. Er bittet um einen Kuß. P. 9.

3. Auff ihre Tugend. P. 16.

4. Die schöne Febricitantin. P. 17. These four poems may all be by C. H., since they follow one assigned to him and are not unlike in tone. Number 4 mentions the lady Clelie who is frequently the subject of C. H. poems.

5. Die schminckpfästrigen. P. 20. C. H. (?)

6. Die überschickten Blumen. P. 30. C. H. (?)

7. Aria. P. 69. Possibly by Besser. See above. Here a more perfect imitation of the French triolet.

Himmel! was vor bittrigkeit  
Heget doch die süße liebe!  
Heute helle/ morgen trübe  
Ist ihr bestes ehren-kleid.  
Himmel/ was vor bittrigkeit  
Heget doch die süße liebe!

8. Die verborgene Wollust. P. 69.

9. Auff ihre Härtigkeit. P. 70.

10. Amarellens-Lobspruch. P. 72.

11. Die heftige Liebe. P. 83. Probably by C. H. Compare the two poems preceding, namely, "Die falsche Liebe," which is signed, and "Die unglückliche Liebe," which is not.

12. Seven *Sinngedichte* all unsigned on p. 343 may be by C. H., who is fond of the couplet.

13. Die Amadis-Liebe. *Sinngedicht*, p. 349. A couplet inserted between two assigned to C. H.

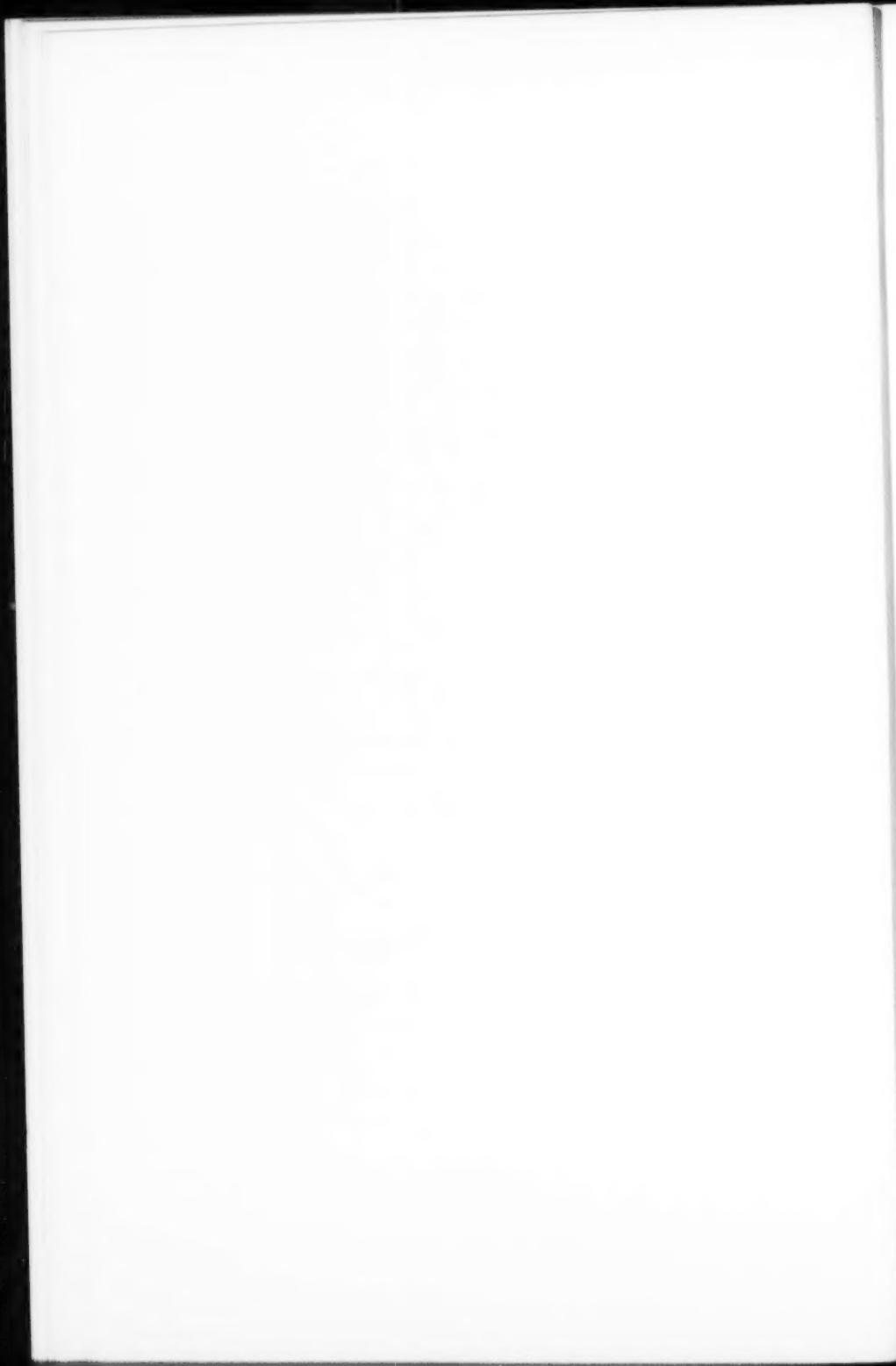
14. The first four *Sinngedichte* on p. 350, which continue in a sequence in which a number signed C. H. appear.

15. Grillen - Fang/ Bey der Ronischen und Siebenhäarigen Braut-Suppe, p. 132. Prose and verse which suggests a number of wedding sports and games.

16. Kurtzer Jedoch sattsamer Bericht von Natur/ Eigenschaft und Würckung derer Braut-Suppen welchen bey der M. B. Braut-Suppen übergab Willebrod Suppen-Schmidt/ von Essens aus Frießland. P. 141. Similar broad humor appears together with more useful folk-loristic references.

The conclusions to be drawn from this additional material which belongs to the whole of the Hofmannswaldau Anthology tradition is that C. H.'s compilation in part V must not be omitted in the consideration of the collectanea as a whole. Many of the same poets are represented, and any complete study of the poems of a poet like Johann von Besser or C. H. cannot afford to overlook the items printed in this volume. The title page's suggestion that the poems might have been printed elsewhere previously must not be taken literally in all instances. The admission of C. H. in the dedication (see note 3 at the end) that he inserted his poems as fillers is certainly true in part. Whether or not Gottlieb Stolle's part V appeared also about 1705 cannot be determined definitely. There is nothing to obviate his having used C. H.'s compilation, a business which is more likely, since there seems to be no question that C. H. was certainly the editor of part IV, and hence had prior editorial recognition, than that C. H. subsequently used part of his successor's material. It is hardly likely that they both had access to a common source book. One is tempted to see rival publishers trying to preempt each other in a venture which certainly was profitable.

*University of California, Berkeley*



## DIE GESCHICHTE DES -T SUFFIXES IN AXT

By ARNO SCHIROKAUER

Wann und mehr noch wo zuerst eine Reihe nhd. Wörter ein -t Suffix annehmen, ist mit genügender Genauigkeit noch nicht festgestellt. Für eine Untersuchung darüber empfiehlt sich *Axt* aus mehreren Gründen, ohne daß allerdings die Verhältnisse hier ohne Weiteres auf Wörter wie *Obst*, *Habicht*, *Hüfte*, *Papst* usw. zu übertragen wären. Das Wort, von dem schon W. Lazius 1557 feststellt, daß die Bayern dafür *Hakhen* sagen, ist nach den Erhebungen Kretschmers 108 f.<sup>1</sup> in vielen heutigen Mundarten ungebräuchlich oder sogar unbekannt; es fehlt durchgängig in den östlichen Alpenländern, Bayern, Franken, Mähren, Schlesien, ferner in Ostfriesland. Damit wird das zu untersuchende Gebiet erheblich eingeengt, grade die Mundarten, die sonst für viele Erscheinungen des entstehenden Neuhochdeutsch verantwortlich zu machen sind, scheiden hier aus. Ein weiterer Vorteil liegt in dem Instrumenten-Charakter des Wortes. Es bezeichnet ein Werkzeug, das dem Bauern wie dem Zimmermann, dem Gelegenheits- wie dem Berufshandwerker unentbehrlich ist, in mehreren sozialen Schichten lebt, dazu noch der "hohen" Sprache gradezu als Symbol tätig-froher Männlichkeit dient, so daß hier ein besonders weites Geltungsfeld bestrichen wird. Endlich kommt noch hinzu, daß die modernen Mundartenwörterbücher meistens den ersten Buchstaben des Alphabets schon bewältigt haben, die Nachweise hier also reichlich, zuweilen fast lückenlos sind.

Das Problem selbst ist von den Lexikographen des 19. Jahrhunderts schon mehr oder weniger klar gesehen und formuliert worden. M. Heynes Feststellung auf S. 265 seines Wörterbuchs: "Das etymologisch unberechtigte *t* ist erst seit dem 13. Jahrhundert sichtbar," scheint wenigstens die Frage nach dem Wann klar zu beantworten, ist aber leider zu korrigieren: Der Zeuge aus dem 13. Jh., Berthold von Regensburg, bietet *axt* nur in dem von Pfeiffer zugrunde gelegten Codex von 1370, während die noch vor 1300 verfertigte Handschrift des sogenannten *St. Georg Prediger* (*Dt. Texte des MA*. Band X [1908] 5, 19 f.) in ihren Berthold-Texten nur *akes* hat. Vielleicht ist das der Grund, daß Götze in seiner

<sup>1</sup> P. Kretschmer: *Wortgeographie der hochdeutschen Umgangssprache* (Göttingen, 1918). Hier wie immer werden Mundartenwörterbücher nur mit dem Verfassernamen zitiert. Die Bibliographie der Mundarten-Lexikographie gilt vollständig W. Mitzka: "Die landschaftlichen Mundartenwörterbücher" (*Zs. f. Mundartforschung*, XIII [1937], 91 ff.); er ist für die Literaturangaben heranzuziehen.

Bearbeitung des *Etymologischen Wörterbuchs* von Kluge (11. Auflage. Berlin 1934) 31 vorsichtig ansetzt: mhd. *ackes*; spätmhd. *art*; was aber auch nur annehmbar ist, wenn man vom Spätmittelhochdeutschen das eigentliche Hochdeutsch ausschließt. Wir sind nicht über J. Grimm hinausgegangen, der im *Deutschen Wörterbuch* 1, 1046 festgestellt hat: "Das heute angehängte *t* ist früher noch oft entbehrlich." Und selbst das ist noch zuviel; vielen Mundarten ist es immer noch entbehrlich: Schmeller 1, 32 kennt nur suffixlose Formen, fügt aber gleich hinzu, das Wort sei im Bayrischen überhaupt nicht üblich, und die alemannischen Verhältnisse beschreibt Fischers Bemerkung im *Schwäbischen Wörterbuch* 1, 548 treffend: "Wie alle älteren germanischen Sprachen entbehren auch die schweizer. und els. Mdaa. das *t* durchaus."

Unter Luthers Einfluß ändert die *Zürcher Bibelübersetzung*, die 1525 noch an der schweizerischen Form festgehalten hatte, 1531 *ax* zu *axt*. Wie wenig eigen dem Schweizer, noch die Suffixform ist, verrät der Plural, der weiter als *ax* gegeben wird. So haben Frisius und Maaler in ihren Wörterbüchern immer nur *ax* und *achs*; Dasypodius, der als Frauenfelder *ax* spricht, verrät seine Mundart im lat.-dt. Teil seines Wörterbuchs wenigstens einmal, der dt.-lat. Teil hat nur *ax(s)t*, für das vielleicht Geiler der Gewährsmann ist. Da weder Tauler noch das Baseler Gedicht *Der Saelden Hirt* noch alte els. Quellen, darunter ein Straßburger Hausname von 1257 *Zur Ackes* (vgl. Ch. Schmidt, 19), noch die heutige Mundart (vgl. Martin-Lienhart 1, 84) t-Formen haben, neige ich dazu, die Suffixform mehr Geilers Drucker als ihm selbst zuzuschreiben. Die Verhältnisse im Elsaß korrespondieren für die alte und die neuere Zeit durchaus mit denen, die uns für die Schweiz das *Idiotikon* 1, 617 schildert, dort kann die Suffixform überhaupt nur aus der Mda. des Schwarzbubenlandes, im Nordwinkel Solothurns nördlich der Jurakette und nur nach der Landschaft Basel hin offen, belegt werden, so daß die Erhebungen mit Recht dahin zusammengefaßt sind: "Die Form mit *t* ist nicht *volkstümlich*".<sup>2</sup> Jutz (*Die Mundart von Südvorarlberg und Liechtenstein* [Heidelberg 1925], 34, 183) kennt gleichfalls keine Suffixformen. Von Kärnten oder, wenn wir dieses erst später dem Wort hinzugewonnene Gebiet ausschließen, vom Zillertal bis an die französ.-alem. Sprachgrenze heißt das Wort noch heute nur *ax*. Rheinabwärts gelten ganz die gleichen Verhältnisse; die luxemburgischen Wörterbücher setzen die elsässer Form fort, die Brücke zu neu niederrädischem *aaks* ist nach Auskunft des *Rheinischen Wörterbuchs* 1, 340 ff. kaum irgendwo unterbrochen: rheinfränk., mosel-

<sup>2</sup> Tobler hat schon 1837 das Gleiche fürs Appenzell festgestellt. W. Claus gibt in § 118 seiner *Mundart v. Uri* (1928) darüber keine Auskunft.

fränk., westmoselfränk., saarländ., ripuar. im Abfallfeld des Hunsrück, im Westerwald überwiegen *ags* Plur. *egs*, eine Durchsicht der Plätze, die *att* belegen, ergibt kein zusammenhängendes Territorium sondern städtische Bezirke wie Saarbrücken, Zell, Kochem, Wittlich, so daß hier die Vermutung ausgesprochen werden darf, die Suffixform gehöre vielleicht der Stadtsprache an. Im städteärmeren Niederdeutschen sind t-Formen unbekannt: Schiller-Lübbens Feststellungen (1, 756) für die ältere Zeit entsprechen die modernen, die Lasch-Borchling 1, 628 und das *Schleswig-Holstein. Wörterbuch* 1, 190 schildern. Auch im Ostniederdeutschen ist es nicht anders; das *Preußische Wörterbuch* 1, 350 sieht "die ältere Form" bis heute konserviert in der niederpreußischen Grenzmark, Staluppen, einem schlesischen Streifen, der sogar Breslau mit einschließt, was neuestens durch Jungandreas (*Zur Geschichte der schlesischen Mundart im MA.* [Breslau 1937], 489) bestätigt wird; aus einer modernen galizischen Mundart, die alte schlesische Verhältnisse bewahrt hat, wird *akes* für weite schlesische Territorien nachgewiesen, wieder völlig in Übereinstimmung mit dem siebenbürg. Sächsisch, wie Kisch 210 und das *Siebenb.-sächs. Wtb.* 1, 360 ff. zeigen. Zurück zu Preußen, so fehlen die Suffixformen in Urkunden, Sprichwörtern bis tief ins 16. Jh., in Danziger Dokumenten sogar noch bis ins Ende des 18. Jh.; erst in sehr junger Zeit ist es in den Kreisen Marienwerder, Tuchel, Neustadt und dem Oberland durchgedrungen. Fehlen noch Böhmen und die sächsischen Randgebiete, um den Gürtel der suffixlosen Formen vollkommen zu machen. In den böhmischen Quellen, die Jelinek seinem Wörterbuch zugrunde legt, hat sowohl Ulrich v. Eschenbach (md. vor 1300) als die *Wenzelbibel* (Prag vor 1400) nur *axe*, *exe*, der *Vocabularius ex quo* von 1432, den Petter seinerzeit abgedruckt hat, nennt gleichfalls *securis* = *ax*; er gehört nach Böhmen, auch wenn sein Lautstand ihn in die ostbayrische Nachbarschaft verweist. Die erzgebirgischen Mundarten des sächsischen Grenzgebiets haben noch heute beide Formen (vgl. Goeppert 36; *Wtb. d. obersächs. u. erzgeb. Mda.* 1, 50), und daß selbst das Leipziger Wörterbuch des Trochus von 1517 *securis* mit *achsse*, *securis bellica* mit *stritachsse* wiedergibt (Diefenbach 523c; Diefenbach Nov. *Glossar.* 333), deutet darauf, daß die t-Form auch im Sächsischen nicht alt und ursprünglich ist.

Da hätten wir denn ein lückenloses Band aller Randgebiete des Deutschen mit der suffixlosen Form, für das Aufkommen des *t* bleiben nur einige *Binnengebiete*. Operieren mit fremdem Einfluß, wie es für die nhd. Diphthongierung versucht worden ist, scheidet mithin aus, da ja die Zufuhr aus der Fremde immer einen Kanal braucht, durch den sie vordringt.

Die besten Belege Lexers (1, 19) stammen aus *Augsburger Stadtchroniken* des ausgehenden 14. Jh. und sind etwa zu bewerten wie jene *axt*, die Diefenbach 53b aus einem böhmischen Vokabular von 1394, Schöpf aus dem *Meraner Stadtrecht* von 1447, Thiele in den mhd. *Minnereden* des Heidelberger Cod. Pal. Germ. 313 ("nord-alem./südfränk. Mda. von ca 1470") notiert. Ferner sind ein niederbayr. Vokabular von Joh. Firmais in Dowerstat 1440, ein Kölner Druck der *Gemma Gemmarum* von 1507, vor allem aber das dt.-lat. Wörterbuch des Nürnberger Druckers Conrad Zeninger von 1482 Zeugen für die Suffixform. Einen geographischen Schluß lassen sie sicherlich nicht zu. Was ihnen allen gemeinsam ist, ist allein ihre *städtische Herkunft!* Eine Durchsicht der Belege bei Diefenbach zeigt aber, daß die Kölner *Gemma* beide Formen bietet, daß Liebingers Vokabular von 1466, dessen pfälz. Mda. deutlich ist, dem wortgeographisch nahen Heidelberger Codex Cod. Pal. Germ. 313 widerspricht, und daß ebenso viele und gute böhm. Wortsammlungen die suffizierte wie die suffixlose Form aufweisen. Sogar die besonders ergiebigen Belege aus Schwaben zeigen nichts als ein Schwanken zwischen beiden Formen. Fischer 1, 547 schildert die Augsburger Verhältnisse des 14., 15. Jh. so eingehend wie nur möglich, weist ein sehr frühes *aygst* schon aus einer Chronik von 1356 nach (vgl. dazu auch Birlinger 38), aber hundert Jahre später finden sich noch beide Formen neben einander, das *Fürstenberger Urkundenbuch* von 1464 schreibt *ayx*, Conrads v. Weinsberg Register 1437/38 *extlin*. In der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jh. belegen Stuttgart, Besigheim, Bietigheim t-Formen, für die man die Mundart nicht verantwortlich machen kann. Die Häufung der Belege in einem kurzen Zeitraum und ihr Zurücktreten später legt es nahe, an eine *Mode* zu denken, deren Träger wieder in erster Linie die Stadtschreiber wären.

Selbst wenn damit die Ausbreitung der t-Form hinreichend erklärt werden könnte, ist über ihre Herkunft nichts entschieden. Die Befragung alter Zeugnisse muß also ergänzt werden durch die Feststellung moderner mundartlicher Verhältnisse. Fischer glaubt eine Linie Balingen, Laupheim, Sissen feststellen zu können, nördlich und nordöstlich von der die Suffix-Form heute gesprochen wird. Das *Badische Wörterbuch* 1, 103 ergänzt die für Schwaben gelgenden Angaben Fischers sehr glücklich und findet eine ziemlich klare Linie, deren Südpol etwa Rastatt ist. Auch Roedder (*Volkssprache und Wortschatz d. badischen Frankenlandes* [New York 1936], 344) setzt für das badische Frankenland *agst*, plur. *egst* an, und der Suffix-Streifen setzt sich—nach den Angaben Kehreins 56 für das Herzogtum Nassau, Raschs 7 für die Werra-Ebene in Hessen-Kassel

südwestlich des Eichsfeldes, Hertels 50 für das Sachsen-Meininge-Werra-Tal zwischen dem Südwestabhang des Thüringer Waldes und Vorderhön—nach Nordosten fort; in Ostfranken hat Heilig 98 für den Taubergrund -t festgestellt. Die entsprechenden Formen in Teilen des Erzgebirges und dem Leipziger Becken können sowohl auf west-md. Einfluß als auf Zuzug von Süden zurückgeführt werden.

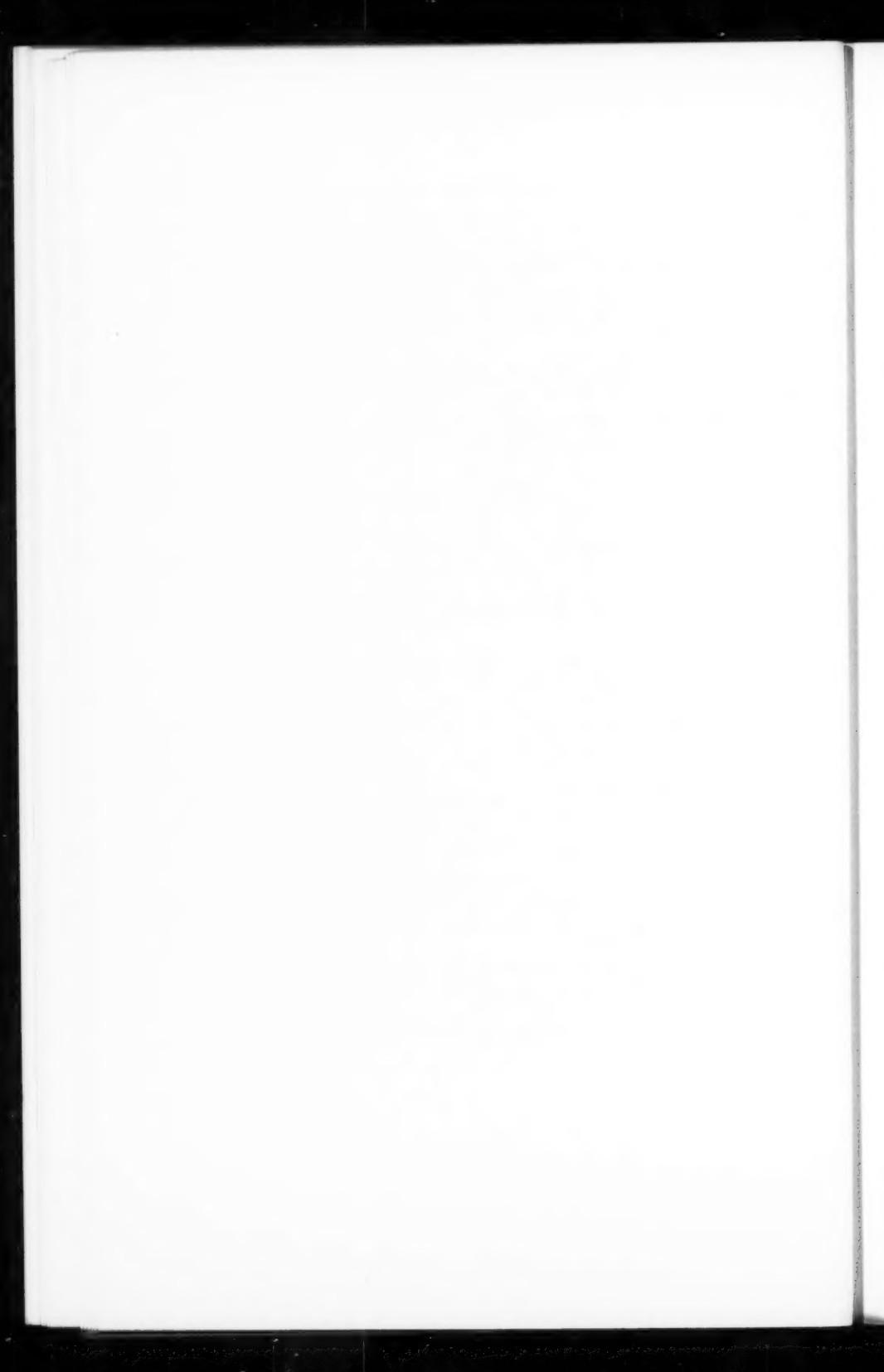
*Axt* ist also heute in einem westschwäbisch-westfränkisch-hessischen Streifen zu Hause, der ohne Verbindung mit einem ostfränkischen scheint. Beide strahlen in die Meißen-Leipziger Bucht aus und setzen die t-Form dort durch. Das kulturelle Übergewicht Sachsns und die weite Geltung des dort etablierten Schriftdialekts verhelfen der Suffixform zu weiter Verbreitung. Geiler, der die Form nie gesprochen haben wird, wird von den Druckern seiner Predigten damit belastet, Fischart schreibt sie bewußt, dem Lexikographen Dasypodium folgen die Kollegen, Denzler in Basel, Hemisch, Wachter. So dringt sie in die Schulen und von da in die Schreibe.

Es läßt sich recht gut sehen, daß aus seinem eigenen Mundartgebiet das Wort nimmer hätte ins Gemeindeutsch aufsteigen können, wäre es nicht zuvor durch Wanderung ins Thüringische gelangt, von da nach Zentral-Sachsen. Erst von hier aus greift es allgemein um sich. Den Schreiber der Berthold-Handschrift von 1370 siedelt Strobl in Worms an, ich würde seine Heimat lieber um ein paar dutzend Meilen an die hessisch-fränk. Grenze verrücken und die Form *axt* seiner Mundart zuschreiben. Aber um diese Zeit ist *axt* vielleicht schon ein Städterwort, ein wenig gehoben, abgehoben von seinem schlchten Ursprungssinn.

Ein Wort von Socin, der Dialekt sei die Scheidewand des Geringen vom Vornehmen, von ihm auf mitteldeutsche Verhältnisse gemünzt, enthält die ganze Erklärung für diese Wortgeschichte. Den Siegeszug krönt eine österr. Regierungsverordnung vom Jahre 1843, die Kretschmer 60 mitteilt; in ihr wird für alle Stadtschulen der gesamten Doppelmonarchie die Verwendung des Wortes *Axt* statt *Hacke* vorgeschrieben.

In städtischen Urkunden begegnet uns die Form zuerst außerhalb ihres Mundarbezirks, im und als Zeichen des feineren Städtertums breitet sie sich aus, und noch im 19. Jahrhundert illustriert sich mit ihr der Gegensatz zwischen Stadt und Land.

*Yale University*



## LES INTENTIONS DE MOLIÈRE

By J. C. CHESSEX

De nos jours, on déclare volontiers que Molière était avant tout un homme de théâtre-né, un acteur, et un auteur comique qui cherchait surtout à plaire à son public. De Racine et de lui, M. Lancaster déclare: "Both looked upon life, portrayed it as artists, not as reformers."<sup>1</sup> Et des critiques qui n'ont pas partagé ce point de vue, il dit plus loin: "They refused to understand that Molière was a comic dramatist, not a philosopher or a propagandist."<sup>2</sup>

Sans souci de moraliser, Molière ne viserait qu'à faire rire et sa morale—du reste absente de plusieurs pièces—ne viserait qu'à amuser le public payant. Elle ne serait donc qu'une réflexion des opinions courantes. Enfin, les déclarations que Molière a pris soin de semer dans ses préfaces et dans ses pièces ne seraient que des arguments de circonstance, parfois même assez prétentieux et qui justifie mal son œuvre. Non, conclut M. Lancaster: "His morality lies in the truth of his pictures and in the healing power of his merriment, not in any lesson he is trying to teach."<sup>3</sup> Le savant critique me fit l'honneur au cours d'une conversation au printemps 1941 à Seattle, d'ajouter à ces lignes ce commentaire: "On peut appeler Molière un moraliste malgré lui."

Pour ceux qui admettent ce point de vue, les prétendues "leçons" des comédies n'ont qu'un intérêt rétrospectif, et elles ne présentent qu'un écho des opinions du temps; ainsi la "philosophie" de Molière se réduit à celle de M. Tout-le-Monde, pour ne pas dire à celle de M. Jourdain.

Tout au plus, ces mêmes critiques admettent que Molière, sans être nécessairement mercenaire, est avant tout un artiste qui se soucie d'art plus que de morale. C'est antédaté de deux siècles la doctrine de "l'art pour l'art." Le dix-septième siècle avait un autre souci de la fonction sociale du théâtre, comme le montrent les critiques adressées non seulement à Molière, mais à Corneille et à Racine. Quand Boileau dit que "rien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable," il ne veut défendre ni Baudelaire, ni Zola. Il est encore plus exigeant dans d'autres passages. On sait assez la rigidité que les règles et les bienséances imposaient à la scène classique. Dans l'esprit de Boileau, le beau et le bon se confondent et le vrai, c'est

<sup>1</sup> *French Dramatic Literature in the 17th Century*, II, sec. 3, p. 849.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 855.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 856.

l'utile comme le raisonnable. Ses contemporains l'entendent bien ainsi.

Le but de la présente étude est de rouvrir la question afin d'examiner la valeur des arguments que nous venons de présenter. Dans une première partie, nous discuterons le point de vue selon lequel Molière serait avant tout un auteur comique, en nous efforçant de définir ces termes. Puis, nous verrons s'il est vrai qu'il garde l'œil sur son public et ne cherche guère à faire de la morale. Dans une seconde partie, nous examinerons les comédies pour en découvrir la morale ou l'absence de cette dernière. Enfin, dans une troisième partie, nous écouterons Molière lui-même et nous nous efforcerons de peser justement son témoignage, auquel nous ajouterons, pour faire bonne mesure, les opinions fameuses, favorables ou non, de ses contemporains.

Il ne restera plus qu'à rassembler les éléments que nous aura apportés notre enquête, et à tirer nos propres conclusions sur la nature des intentions de Molière.

### I. Molière et le Comique.

Prétendre qu'un auteur se confine à la comédie demande nécessairement une définition préalable du comique sans laquelle un tel jugement ne reposeraient sur aucune base solide. Mais, au moment de définir nos termes, nous devons nous rappeler que la critique n'est peut-être pas bon juge du monde frivole des théâtres, et que le seul fait d'y cantonner un écrivain ne suffit pas à lui enlever le droit de faire de la morale, ou, du moins, d'en avoir l'intention.

Devançant Bergson, l'auteur de la "Lettre sur l'Imposteur," dans sa pénétrante analyse de la pièce dont il avait vu, sous le titre de *Panulphe*, la représentation publique à Paris le 5 août 1667, écrivait, le 20 du même mois :

Le ridicule est donc la forme extérieure et sensible que la providence de la nature a attachée à tout ce qui est déraisonnable pour nous en faire apercevoir et nous obliger à le fuir.

Plus loin, montrant la leçon qu'on doit tirer de la pièce, il répétait :

si la disconvenance est l'essence du ridicule, il est aisé de voir pourquoi la galanterie de Panulphe paraît ridicule, et l'hypocrisie en général aussi.

Ainsi donc, ce qui n'est ni raisonnable, ni convenable, est ridicule. (Remarquons en passant combien cela est classique et "dix-septième." Molière n'y pouvait échapper; loin de là, nous savons qu'il demeure un des représentants les plus illustres de la doctrine.)

Ce qui est commun à tous, accepté et reçu de tous, n'est pas comique. L'ordinaire ne fait point rire. Seul ce qui semble être en contradiction avec les lois naturelles ou avec la structure sociale, par accident, par erreur, ou par un malentendu, nous divertit et nous fait rire. Le rire est un correctif social. Les animaux ne rient pas parce qu'ils suivent la fonction et l'instinct de leur espèce. L'homme, au contraire, en refusant ou en se heurtant aux lois de l'espèce devient ridicule.

Ainsi Molière, auteur comique, nous fait rire en exposant l'extravagance, la prétention, l'artifice, tout ce qui sort de la nature et de la borne. Ses titres sont révélateurs: *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, *L'Hypocrite*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Le Mariage Forcé*, *Le Médecin malgré Lui*, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, pour ne citer que quelques exemples.

Mais ce n'est pas tout que de savoir ce qui fait rire et ce qui plaît. Encore faut-il l'exécuter avec succès. Donc, Molière n'est pas seulement un acteur, un directeur, et un auteur comique: c'est un bon acteur, un habile directeur, et un auteur de génie. Il est créateur, observateur, et philosophe. C'est donc un homme au-dessus du commun; sa supériorité est le fait de son intelligence et de son art. Nous le savons tous. Un Scribe, si doué qu'il soit, ne fait pas œuvre morale, parce que son habileté se base sur les trucs du métier et sur l'artifice, et parce qu'il a garde de toucher à la morale courante qu'il accepte sans discuter. Mais un Molière tire ses exemples de la vie même, et ses réflexions ont leur prix.

Il pouvait gagner de l'argent, assurer sa gloire, plaire au public et au roi. Nous l'admettons volontiers. Mais l'aurait-il fait, s'il n'avait compris ce que comporte un art essentiellement social? Il aurait fallu pour cela qu'il vécût son art inconsciemment, à une époque où les soucis éthiques et sociaux préoccupaient tous les esprits.

Comment oublier en effet les querelles de goût dont les précieuses remplissaient leurs ruelles, et qui ont fourni à Molière deux satires immortelles? Querelles de morale (comme celle, entre mille, qui mettait aux prises Corneille et l'Académie au sujet de Chimène dans le *Cid*), querelles de religion dont retentit tout le siècle, et où figurent Jésuites et Jansénistes, Libertins, Protestants, Quiétistes, Gallicans et Ultramontains; querelles esthétiques et littéraires, alimentées par Boileau, l'ami de Molière, toutes ces luttes se poursuivaient autour de ce dernier, et il les aurait ignorées?

Molière a joué Corneille et Racine; il a fréquenté les meilleurs esprits du temps et sans doute lu ou entendu leurs vues sur les fonctions de l'art (y compris celui de la comédie); il a combattu le fanatisme, le préjugé, la bêtise. Comment alors n'aurait-il pas senti, pas

compris le rôle social de la comédie? Faut-il admettre que Molière, ayant reconnu ce rôle, n'en aurait rien fait, ou même pis, s'en serait moqué? Faut-il admettre que Molière, vivant au siècle de la raison, instruit sur lui-même par le succès de ses comédies comme par les critiques qu'elles susciterent, n'ait pas soupçonné l'influence morale bonne ou mauvaise qu'elles allaient nécessairement exercer? Ou devons-nous croire qu'il ne se souciait que de faire de l'argent?

Gustave Lanson disait, dans son article sur Molière:

Ceci nous fait passer à la morale de Molière. On peut se demander s'il en a une, et si ce n'est pas nous qui la lui prêtons. Mais, d'abord, il est impossible qu'une observation profonde des hommes ne repose pas sur une certaine conception de la vie et du bien, et ne s'y termine pas. Et ensuite Molière nous avertit que la comédie a essentiellement pour objet de corriger les mœurs humaines. Il le dit pour justifier son *Tartuffe*, mais ce n'est point un argument de circonstance. Dans toute la suite de son œuvre, il a fait de la satire sociale ou morale: il a posé ses ridicules et ses honnêtes gens de façon à ne nous laisser jamais douter qu'il ne blâme cela et n'approuve ceci. (*Hist. Litt. Fr.* [1928], pp. 525-6.)

On voit par là que Lanson reconnaissait à Molière, au moins dès *Tartuffe*, une intention didactique qu'expliquait son observation des hommes. Que la préface ait été ou non une justification, ne change rien à l'affaire, puisque l'on retrouve ce dessein "dans toute la suite de son œuvre."

Boileau n'avait pas attendu *Tartuffe* pour féliciter son ami sur la portée morale de son œuvre. Dans les *Stances à Molière*, il lui écrivait, à propos de *L'Ecole des Femmes*:

Ta muse avec utilité  
Dit plaisamment la vérité;  
Chacun profite à ton *Ecole*;  
Tout en est beau, tout en est bon;  
Et ta plus burlesque parole  
Est souvent un docte sermon.

L'honnête Boileau blâmait et louait tour à tour, ce qui nous permet d'accepter son éloge sans l'écartier sous prétexte qu'il vient d'un ami.

Quant à G. Michaut, il remonte même plus haut et c'est dans *L'Ecole des Maris* qu'il discerne pour la première fois l'intention didactique de Molière. Dans *Les débuts de Molière à Paris* (pp. 124-25), il dit ceci:

Peinture des mœurs contemporaines, et peinture de caractères vivants, *L'Ecole des Maris* fait, de plus, penser. Et ce titre d'*Ecole*, que Molière semble bien avoir le premier employé comme titre de pièce, symbolise assez nettement cette ambition, nouvelle chez lui.

C'est dater de 1661 l'évolution consciente des sentiments ou des intentions de Molière. C'est dire que, dès ce moment-là, l'éducateur remplacera le bouffon. Nous verrons plus loin, dans notre troisième partie, que nous croyons pouvoir avancer de deux ans, sur la foi de Molière lui-même, la date à laquelle il s'est donné comme but de corriger les mœurs.

Au cours des pages qui précèdent, nous avons vu qu'un auteur essentiellement comique est par là même, essentiellement moraliste. Dire que Molière était avant tout auteur comique serait affirmer son influence morale. (L'homme ne fait rien qui n'ait ses conséquences et ses répercussions, "nos actes nous suivent.") De plus, Molière est grand auteur, et son influence en est plus grande. Chez un Scribe, le manque de profondeur explique le peu de retentissement moral de son œuvre; seule, la technique subsiste. Au reste, Scribe n'écrit guère que des comédies d'intrigue. Mais on ne saurait juger Molière avec le même étalon. Grand observateur, sa profonde méditation sur la vie l'eût fatallement conduit à une conception morale du monde, même si l'atmosphère du Grand Siècle n'avait pas été là pour l'en-tourer et lui montrer de toutes parts, la morale classique en travail.

Reste le point des relations de Molière avec le public. Nous y avons déjà jeté quelque lumière, en constatant que le rire, correctif social, ne jaillit point du conformisme ni de l'ordinaire. C'est dire que l'auteur comique doit attaquer les travers, les folies, les manies de quelques-uns, pour mettre la plupart des rieurs de son côté, Autrement, ou bien personne ne rirait de ses plaisanteries, ou la colère de la masse outragée écraserait l'audacieux.

Ainsi, quand Molière attaque les Précieuses, il a le reste de la population pour lui; ses traits contre les marquis trouvaient des partisans chez le roi comme parmi le peuple. Et quand il rit des médecins, il a pour lui leurs victimes. Il est ici complice de ses spectateurs. Nous allons voir tout à l'heure qu'il a composé pour eux des farces sans prétention, qui sont précisément la partie la plus discutable de son œuvre, du point de vue moral, et *la moins discutée*.

Mais les grandes comédies ont une autre envergure. Molière ose y affronter les puissants, les bourgeois, ou le peuple, et toute la cohorte des préjugés, des erreurs, et du fanatisme. L'opposition ne l'arrête, point; il s'entête, il revient à la charge. Il se bat cinq ans pour *Tartuffe*. Cela démontre un étalon personnel auquel il tient. Tout au long des comédies, il dénonce la fausseté et les prétentions mondaines, bourgeois, littéraires, philosophiques et scientifiques. Apôtre du bon sens et de la mesure, il a l'artifice en horreur. C'est à son public de le suivre.

Ainsi Molière n'est pas un moraliste qui entend réformer les hommes. Il croit, comme Philinte, que

c'est une folie à nulle autre seconde  
De vouloir se mêler de réformer le monde. (*Mis.*, I, 1.)

C'est pourquoi ses types d'avare, d'hypocrite, de parvenu et de maniaque sont encore plus fous à la fin des comédies qu'au début, car la nature de l'homme ne change pas. Molière n'est pas non plus un moraliste qui propose des types de héros idéal, pas plus qu'il ne se fait le défenseur d'institutions sociales particulières comme le mariage, qui, du reste, n'a pas besoin de champion. Mais, ainsi que l'explique "l'Argument" du *Mariage Force*, Ballet du Roi :

Comme il n'y a rien au monde qui soit si commun que le mariage, et que c'est une chose sur laquelle les hommes ordinairement se tournent le plus en ridicules, il n'est pas merveilleux que ce soit toujours la matière de la plupart des comédies...

Non, Molière est moraliste autant qu'il est artiste, en ce sens que la source de son inspiration n'est pas toujours simplement le désir de plaire ou de faire de l'argent. Son entêtement à propos des hypocrites comme des médecins le prouve surabondamment. Il est moraliste parce que, s'il veut amuser son public au cours des farces, dans les grandes comédies il lui propose une méditation souriante plutôt qu'un rire intempestif. Il trouve donc, dans ces œuvres où éclatent le plus ses soins et son talent, que cette attitude favorise le bonheur. Là, Molière préconise une manière de vivre, une modération philosophique qui n'est pas comique en soi. Ceux qui s'en écartent seront l'objet de nos risées. Mais les raisonneurs, personnages sympathiques, ne prêtent point à rire. La donnée même des pièces indique ce souci de l'auteur. C'est ainsi que lorsque Molière dans son *Misanthrope* décrit l'hypocrisie de la bonne société du temps, le professeur Lancaster peut résumer le "problème"—non pas la thèse—comme suit: "Moreover, Molière exposes the superficiality and falsity of this society and raises the question whether it is better to tolerate it or to leave it."<sup>4</sup>

Ainsi donc, nous voulons bien croire que Molière est un artiste qui abandonne rarement son rôle d'arbitre. Il n'y a pas besoin d'être Anglo-Saxon pour comprendre qu'on puisse aimer encore ce dont on se moque, ou rire de ce qu'on apprécie. Mais si Molière ne fait pas de sermons (et c'est tant mieux pour nous), s'il ne propose pas souvent des thèses, comme un Dumas Fils ou un Brieux, nous ne saurions accepter de le traiter de moraliste malgré lui. Ceux qui le font témoignent seulement par là de leur myopie. Il leur faut ces lunettes qui corrigent la courte vue selon laquelle, hors le sermon, pas de salut, ou du moins, pas de moraliste.

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<sup>4</sup> Lancaster, *op. cit.*, II, sec. 3, p. 657.

## II. La Leçon des Comédies.

L'examen des pièces de Molière révèle des groupes d'importance diverse. *L'Etourdi* et le *Dépit Amoureux* sont farces à l'italienne appartenant encore à l'apprentissage de Molière. *Sganarelle tient déjà du portrait*; le *Médecin malgré Lui* et les *Fourberies* sont encore de cette veine. Concessions au goût facile du parterre, ces pièces n'ont guère soulevé que des querelles de goût, encore qu'elles contiennent ce qu'il y a de plus amoral chez Molière.

Ce sont elles qui reflètent l'éthique du peuple, qui est basse, et où l'astuce remplace la droiture, tandis que les coups de bâton y font office de justice. Mais on s'est peu inquiété de l'influence de ces farces que l'on abandonnait au vulgaire pour qui elles étaient composées. Nous verrons qu'on a scruté surtout les grandes comédies, leur accordant par là le rang de pièces à conviction.

Il y a pourtant des éléments de farce dans bien d'autres comédies. Mais ce n'est pas le point de ces œuvres. La querelle qu'on fait à Molière se base, dans ces cas-là, sur la leçon même de la comédie, et ce qu'on reproche à *Dom Juan* ou à *Dandin*, au *Bourgeois* comme au *Malade*, est plus profond que les coups de bâton, poursuites, mascarades, et cérémonies qui s'y trouvent et que, pour notre part, nous ne regrettons pas.

Un second groupe d'œuvres comprend ces pièces de circonstance, ballets, et divertissements commandés par le roi à son comédien, et qui doivent à leur origine ainsi qu'à la hâte involontaire de l'auteur, leur rang de menu ordinaire, vrai miroir d'une époque et de son goût pour les "spectacles." Ces œuvres ne comptaient pas plus dans l'estime de leur auteur qu'elles ne comptent dans la nôtre. Il n'a écrit pour elles ni préfaces, ni apologies, et ne se souciait guère de les faire imprimer. Si elles ont survécu, c'est qu'elles sont tout de même de la plume de Molière et que son génie irrépressible y a semé à l'occasion, des remarques vraies et profondes qui passent la portée du divertissement.

Dans ce groupe, nous comptons les *Fâcheux*, le ballet du *Mariage Forcé*, la *Princesse d'Elide*, *L'Amour Médecin*, comédie-ballet, *Méléicerte*—pastorale héroïque!—le *Sicilien*, les *Amants Magnifiques*, *Psyché* (en collaboration avec Corneille, Quinault, et Lulli), presque tout *Pourceaugnac*, et pour finir: *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*.

*Amphitryon* est une œuvre à part. Inspirée (comme *L'Avare*) des Anciens, elle ne tend point, comme ce dernier, à tracer le portrait complet d'un vice. Celui qu'elle dépeint de façon si légère et charmante est bien universel et mériterait à ce titre la censure comme la méritent la vanité ou l'hypocrisie. Mais voilà une œuvre d'art où l'auteur ne cherche que le tour agréable d'une comédie de mœurs

légères, fantaisiste ancêtre d'une *Belle Hélène* qu'elle dépasse de beaucoup. Ce n'est cependant qu'une anecdote au théâtre, qui ne vise à rien qu'à distraire. Le sujet, quoique immoral et léger, n'est certes pas aussi sinistre que ceux de *Britannicus* ni de *Phèdre*. C'est peut-être une leçon de mauvaises manières. La Cour et le Roi donnaient de pires exemples.

La virtuosité du poète, rival ici de Lafontaine, s'y exerce librement et sans autre dessein que de briller. Mais qui prétendra donner à cette pièce épisodique, ou aux ballets et fééries qui l'entourent, la première place au point de vue du sens profond de l'œuvre de Molière ?

*La Critique* et *L'Impromptu* ne sont des comédies que par le génie magicien de Molière. Mais ce sont des ouvrages d'une importance spéciale touchant ses idées sur son art et sur son métier, comme sur ses ennemis et ses confrères, tant acteurs qu'écrivains.

Il reste donc une liste réduite que nous aurons tôt fait de couvrir. Elle comprendra les autres pièces de Molière, moins *Dom Garcie* qui n'a jamais eu la prétention d'être une simple comédie et qu'il nous faut ainsi oublier.

*Les Précieuses*, les deux *Ecoles*, *Tartuffe* et *Dom Juan*, le *Misanthrope* et *George Dandin*, *l'Avare*; le *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, les *Femmes Savantes* et le *Malade*. Onze pièces, un tiers du nombre total. Mais quel tiers ! On pourrait oublier les autres, et Molière en serait à peine diminué. Or, que nous révèlent ces œuvres maîtresses ?

*Les Précieuses* nous montrent la prétention cruellement punie ; les deux *Ecole*s : la raison, la nature qui triomphent de l'étroitesse d'esprit inspirée par un monstrueux égoïsme. *Tartuffe* souligne les dangers que peut faire courir à une famille (donc à la société), l'hypocrisie presque triomphante. A ce sujet, M. Lancaster dit : "Molière's second comedy of character carries out more completely the aims he had expressed in the first. His theme is hypocrisy in conflict with a family." (*Op. cit.*, III, 2, p. 626.) Il vaut bien même de citer le saisissant résumé de la pièce que donne M. Lancaster, car il montre mieux que toute autre chose ce que l'on doit penser des buts et du thème de Molière, pour employer les termes mêmes de cet auteur, qui déclare que jamais auparavant le poète n'avait fait ressortir :

... the devastating effect of vice upon a family. We see its peace destroyed, the father's affections alienated, the daughter's future threatened, the son driven out, the wife's honor imperiled, the house handed over to an outsider, and finally the head of the family arrested. Spiritual unity is attained by the unmasking of the villain, but so much evil has been done that only royal intervention will save the home. (*Ibid.*, p. 629.)

Après un tableau pareil, il nous faudrait encore croire à un Molière impassible, indifférent, qui ne l'aurait brossé que par pur souci esthétique !

L'assurance impertinente de *Dom Juan* défie les hommes, leurs conventions, et leurs institutions ; le Ciel seul peut venger ses crimes, comme le Roi seul était assez fort pour briser la position si bien retranchée de *Tartuffe*.

Ces deux dernières comédies prêtent à penser. On ne sait peut-être pas pourquoi Molière a écrit *Tartuffe*, mais il l'a écrit ; bien plus, il se battit cinq ans pour avoir le droit de le donner librement en public. Pourquoi cette insistance, s'il ne trouvait sa pièce ni populaire, ni politique ? Pour un homme qui cherche à plaire, ce serait là un manque de finesse inconcevable. Pourquoi même revenir à la charge avec *Dom Juan* immédiatement après ? Il ne suffit pas pour expliquer cette action incongrue, de dire que le sujet était à la mode et qu'on le jouait dans les théâtres. Non, M. Lancaster souligne bien que le succès du sujet n'est pas suffisant à en expliquer le choix, et que Molière avait quelque autre raison en tête. Il dit : "The theme that he selected was one that not only had proved its popularity at Paris, but gave him an opportunity to thrust again at hypocrites" (*op. cit.*, p. 634). Voilà bien une intention. Ceux qui affirment que Molière n'était qu'un auteur à succès auront quelque peine à expliquer qu'un habile homme tel que celui qu'ils nous représentent ait pu manquer à ce point de jugement, de flair commercial, et se soit attaqué à un sujet si délicat sitôt après l'alerte de *Tartuffe*.

Puis c'est le *Misanthrope* où règne l'hypocrisie du monde. Célimène et ses amis, la sèche Arsinoé y sont démasqués et exposés au ridicule. Il n'est pas jusqu'au "franc scélérat" avec qui Alceste a son procès, qui ne reçoive la censure. Mais l'honnête homme y perd ses droits, dira-t-on, et son argent, et ses relations, et jusqu'à l'objet de sa farouche affection. Il est vrai, mais il n'est pas encore "au désert." De plus, c'est là le prix du zèle exagéré—and par conséquent comique—, avec lequel il réclame une franchise absolue et incompatible avec la vie de société.

*George Dandin* dévoile le danger des mésalliances, car l'argent ne peut acheter que le rang, mais non le cœur d'une perverse. Comme le reconnaît Dandin lui-même, son sort déplorable est le lot de ceux qui épousent "une méchante femme."

Harpagon, par son avarice, est un agent de corruption et de désintégration de la famille (donc de la société), comparable en son genre à Orgon, dont l'entêtement pour *Tartuffe* a conduit les siens et lui-même au bord de la catastrophe. Son vice flétrit tout ce qu'il atteint et son exemple est funeste à chacun. M. Lancaster dit

d'Harpagon : "Avarice makes him socially ridiculous, brings discontent among his servants, alienates his children's affection and makes them impudent" (*Op. cit.*, p. 717).

Monsieur Jourdain lui aussi, dans sa soif immoderée des belles choses, compromet la sécurité et le bonheur de son ménage comme les siens propres. "The antagonism between his snobbishness and his family's welfare is clearly set forth," dit encore M. Lancaster (*ibid.*, p. 727). La folie des Femmes Savantes en fait de même parmi les leurs. C'est enfin le cas d'Argan, dont l'obsession donne l'occasion à son abominable femme de comploter contre sa vie et sa fortune ; et sa folie menace l'avenir même de sa fille. Il vaut bien qu'on satisfasse sa manie, comme on a complu à celle de M. Jourdain. Cette punition de leur extravagance est méritée ; elle donnera quelque repos à leur entourage. On donne bien de l'opium à ceux qui se droguent.

Ces satires immortelles sont bien trop vives pour n'être que des sujets à succès. Elles entraînent des réflexions sur la société qui sont nécessaires et salutaires. Non point certes qu'elles manifestent l'inquiétude spirituelle dont retentissent les sermons de Bourdaloue ou de Bossuet. Mais ce sont les remarques, dévastatrices dans leurs saillies, d'un bourgeois français honnête homme, qui se moque des façons et des engouements de ses contemporains comme il se rit de l'éternelle folie humaine. Molière, répète ses critiques, ne fait pas de sermons. Ils ont raison. Il lui suffit des comédies pour nous faire connaître ses vues.

Il faut répéter que la mesure même montrée par Molière dans ses tirades de raisonneurs souligne le juste milieu qu'il approuvait. Peut-être est-ce à cause de cela que ses critiques refusent de voir en lui un moraliste. Ils ne croient point qu'on puisse être activement moral dans le juste milieu. "Qui n'est pas pour moi est contre moi," à quoi l'on peut ajouter : "il n'y a pas de milieu." Mais il faut réfuter ce point de vue : il y a souvent plus d'héroïsme à maintenir l'équilibre qu'à plonger tête baissée dans l'ennemi. C'est le secret de la sagesse de Montaigne.

Enfin, pour comprendre les intentions de Molière, nous n'avons pas seulement des données vagues, une liste de pièces et de sujets avec les conclusions qu'on en peut tirer. Nous avons ses dires à lui. Nous pouvons le faire déposer en son nom. Il sera toujours temps, après l'avoir entendu, de voir si nous devons le croire.

### III. Molière interprète de Molière.

La première déclaration de Molière sur ses intentions date du *premier document* qu'il ait écrit sur son œuvre. On ne peut donc pas dire qu'il ait mis du temps à comprendre le rôle moral et social de

la comédie ni à s'en expliquer. En effet, dans la Préface des *Précieuses*, publiée quelques mois après la première représentation du 18 novembre 1659, Molière déclare que si des éditions illégitimes de sa pièce ne l'avaient pas forcé à se faire imprimer si tôt, il aurait expliqué :

mes intentions sur le sujet de cette comédie. J'aurais voulu faire voir qu'elle se tient partout dans les bornes de la satire honnête et permise ; que les plus excellentes choses sont sujettes à être copiées par de mauvais singes qui méritent d'être bernés ; que ces vicieuses imitations de ce qu'il y a plus parfait ont été de tout temps la matière de la comédie.

Voilà qui est clair : Molière entendait—dès 1659—censurer les mœurs. C'est là, dit-il, le but de la *satire*. De *mauvais singes* sont de pauvres imitateurs. L'adjectif et le nom indiquent le mépris, donc la critique. De même les verbes : Ils *méritent* d'être *bernés*. Enfin, les *vicieuses* imitations (ce n'est pas très flatteur) sont la matière éternelle de la comédie. Peut-on s'expliquer plus clairement ? Il n'y a dans ce passage aucune trace de la prudence qu'on veut voir dans la préface de *Tartuffe*. Non, ici Molière est tout à la joie : sa pièce a réussi au-delà de ses espérances ; il est à la mode ; il publie son premier livre. Son plaisir éclate dans les pointes qu'il adresse non seulement aux précieuses ridicules, mais aux auteurs "ses frères," ainsi qu'à l'art des préfaces auquel il met la première main. En un mot, il ne s'excuse pas, il s'explique. M. Lancaster, dans un récent séminaire sur Molière à l'Université de Washington (printemps 1941), faisait remarquer combien, dès les *Précieuses*, la langue de Molière est réaliste et vraie, et comment elle convient si bien aux personnages. Si cela est vrai, comme nous le croyons, il s'ensuit que cette vérité s'applique à Molière encore plus qu'à Gorgibus et aux autres créatures de son invention. Par conséquent, on ne saurait soutenir que Molière a mal écrit sa préface ou que les termes qu'il y emploie sont choisis au hasard.

G. Michaut, nous l'avons vu, fait dater cette ambition "nouvelle chez lui," de *L'Ecole des Maris* dans laquelle il voit trois thèses proposées par Molière. Cette dernière pièce date de 1661, et les *Précieuses* la précède de deux ans. Pour nous, le passage si spontané que nous venons de citer nous semble suffisant à prouver que, dès 1659, Molière avait l'intention de faire de la satire (c'est son propre terme) en dénonçant les extravagances de son siècle. Cette intention, pour nette qu'elle soit ici, peut même avoir précédé les *Précieuses*, mais la première preuve que nous en ayons se trouve dans ce passage de la Préface. Or, si Molière, comme il le dit ici avec exubérance, a cette intention de censurer les mœurs, c'est la preuve même du fait

que, dès 1659, il n'est pas simplement un auteur de comédies populaires qui se moque de leur contenu et de leur effet.

Mais nous avons d'autres preuves qui viennent s'ajouter à ce premier témoignage pour le confirmer. En décembre 1662, Molière donnait *L'Ecole des Femmes*. Dans la préface, le Poète annonçait la *Critique* qui "rendrait raison de son ouvrage" et "répondrait aux censeurs."

La *Critique* fut jouée pour la première fois le 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1663. Molière y défendait son droit à faire rire en peignant les ridicules de son temps. A la sixième scène, la sage Uranie, championne de l'auteur et de son *Ecole*, déclare... .

Ces sortes de satires tombent directement sur les mœurs, et ne frappent les personnes que par réflexion. N'allons point nous appliquer nous-mêmes les traits d'une censure générale, et profitons de la leçon, si nous pouvons, sans faire semblant qu'on parle à nous.

Voilà répétée l'affirmation que la comédie est une "satire" qui "tombe directement sur les mœurs." Et, comme il convient à une *Ecole*, ceux qui y participent doivent, s'ils en sont capables, profiter de la "leçon." Nous voyons par là que ce n'est pas le fond de la comédie, mais la forme, qu'il consacre au succès; c'est à dire que le sujet, critique morale ou sociale, ne sera pas du goût de tout le monde, et tant pis pour ceux qu'atteint cette satire. Mais la forme, sujette aux "règles," doit être habile et plaisante. Ici, Molière s'accorde avec Racine et la préface de *Bérénice*. En effet, dans cette même scène six, il fait dire à Dorante: "Je voudrais bien savoir si la grande règle de toutes les règles n'est pas de plaire."

On cite souvent ce passage pour prouver que Molière ne cherche qu'à plaire. Mais d'abord Dorante parle règles parce qu'il répond ici à un poète qui discute règles et non pas morale. Nous venons de voir que la pièce est plus vaste que cela et touche aussi à d'autres aspects de *L'Ecole*. En outre, s'il faut parler des règles, Dorante trouve que *L'Ecole* a suivi la règle fondamentale de la comédie, qui est d'amuser et de plaire. Il ajoute en effet plus loin et dans la même scène:

Car enfin, si les pièces qui sont selon les règles ne plaisent pas, et que celles qui plaisent ne soient pas selon les règles, il faudrait de nécessité que les règles eussent été mal faites.

Voilà qui est fort clair: Molière, par un sens pratique où l'on reconnaît son milieu et son éducation, ne dit pas qu'il fait une pièce régulière afin qu'elle plaise au public, mais que, puisque sa pièce a plu, il faut qu'elle soit bonne, selon les règles ou en dépit d'elles. Ainsi le fond de la comédie, qu'il vient de revendiquer pour la satire des mœurs, prime la forme, du reste bonne, à juger de l'un et de l'autre par le succès de la pièce.

La même année, en décembre 1663, *l'Impromptu* donnait à Molière une nouvelle occasion d'expliquer ses desseins. Son camarade Brécourt (qu'il met en scène ainsi que lui-même et sa troupe) explique aux autres acteurs—c'est à dire au public—les intentions de Molière: "son dessein est de peindre les mœurs sans vouloir toucher aux personnes. . . ."

Plus loin, dans cette même scène 4, il ajoute:

Comme l'affaire de la comédie est de représenter en général tous les défauts des hommes et principalement des hommes de notre siècle, il est impossible à Molière de faire aucun caractère qui ne rencontre quelqu'un dans le monde.

Le 12 mai 1664, Molière donne les trois actes de *L'Imposteur* au-milieu des réjouissances somptueuses de la Cour. C'en est fait: il vient de lancer une bombe. On sait les vicissitudes de la pièce. Lorsque Molière put enfin, en 1669, la représenter librement, il l'imprima avec la Préface à laquelle nous allons demander encore des éclaircissements:

il . . . faut . . . regarder ce qu'est la comédie en soi, pour voir si elle est condamnable. On connaîtra sans doute, que, n'étant autre chose qu'un poème ingénieux qui par des leçons agréables reprend les défauts des hommes, on ne saurait le censurer sans injustice."

Touchant les défauts, il ajoute: "si l'emploi de la comédie est de corriger les vices des hommes, je ne vois pas pourquoi il y en aura de privilégiés."

Voilà donc l'hypocrisie ajoutée aux autres "vices" que censure la Comédie. Au reste, Molière n'avait pas attendu l'heure de la Préface pour réclamer ses droits de réformateur. Dans le premier "Placet au Roy," il disait déjà:

j'avais eu, Sire, la pensée que je ne rendrais pas un petit service à tous les honnêtes gens de votre royaume, si je faisais une comédie qui décriât les hypocrites et mit en vue comme il faut toutes les grimaces étudiées de ces gens de bien à outrance, toutes les friponneries couvertes de ces faux-monnayeurs en dévotion, qui veulent attraper les hommes avec un zèle contrefait et une charité sophistiquée.

Les termes que nous soulignons montrent clairement l'intention critique, réprobatrice, et morale de Molière. Le second "Placet" revient à la charge: "(les hypocrites) . . . ne sauraient me pardonner de dévoiler leurs impostures aux yeux tout le monde."

Quant à la pièce elle-même, il assure que: "les plus scrupuleux en ont trouvé la représentation profitable."

Certains veulent voir ici un argument "pro domo." Mais Molière aurait-il osé se vanter si fort au roi lui-même, s'il avait craint qu'on ne l'exposât comme un "entrepreneur de pièces" sans souci de l'effet moral de son œuvre? Certainement non. Touchant le sujet d'*Amphitryon*, M. Lancaster nous rappelle que Molière venait d'obtenir du Roi par les "Placets" la promesse d'une révision de la question de *Tartuffe*, et il ajoute: "Was this the moment to be risking delicate irony at the King's expense? . . . He knew very well how disastrous royal displeasure would be" (*op. cit.*, p. 518). Il va de soi que si Molière observe la plus grande prudence au sujet d'*Amphitryon*, à plus forte raison en aurait-il fait autant dans les "Placets" qui défendent *Tartuffe*, dont l'importance passe de beaucoup pour lui celle d'une simple pièce à machines. Cette déclaration renforce donc notre conviction: Molière ne ruse pas avec Louis, il ne cherche pas à tromper ni à plaider sa cause à l'aide de raisons qu'il saurait injustifiées ou qu'il craindrait même de voir prendre comme telles.

De quel droit, du reste, refuserions-nous de croire Molière? Il est plus arbitraire d'écartier sa déclaration sous le prétexte qu'elle n'est qu'une apologie hypocrite, que de l'accepter telle quelle. A tout le moins, il est impossible après avoir lu les citations qui précédent, de soutenir que Molière ignorait la fonction sociale de la comédie. Et c'est pure invention que d'imaginer un Molière conscient des lois et fonctions de son art et cependant indifférent à ce que ces principes exigeaient de lui. C'est d'autant plus impossible à soutenir du reste, que les comédies elles-mêmes témoignent par cent passages, des théories, des idées, des intentions de l'auteur touchant l'éducation, l'amour, la piété, la science, la médecine, et bien d'autres sujets encore. Enfin, il a, des premiers, choisi ce titre d'*Ecole* pour deux de ses comédies, et cela longtemps avant *Tartuffe* et sa préface.

Nous venons de voir au cours de cette revue, qu'il définissait ses intentions dès 1659, à l'occasion des *Précieuses*; qu'il les répétait en 1663, dans la *Critique*, puis dans l'*Impromptu*; enfin, qu'à partir de 1664, il y revenait encore dans les "Placets" et la préface de *Tartuffe*, sans jamais les modifier. Faut-il donc s'obstiner à nier l'évidence?

Il est pour le moins difficile de comprendre comment est née l'impression que nous signalons dans l'introduction; il l'est peut-être davantage de comprendre comment cette impression peut se maintenir au contact des faits et des textes. Peut-être cette vue est-elle sœur de celle qui prévaut aujourd'hui dans la critique shakespeareenne. On sait que celle-ci, à force d'hypothèses et de théories, ne laisse presque subsister du poète anglais qu'un "fantôme sans os."

Il n'a plus d'intentions, plus de génie, plus de textes. Il faut voir dans cette attitude de la critique en Europe comme en Amérique, une réaction salutaire contre les opinions dogmatiques et militantes qui avaient cours autrefois sur la portée de l'œuvre de Shakespeare ou de Molière. Mais cette réaction elle-même est en train de passer son but et risque de tomber à son tour dans un excès tout aussi déplorable que celui qu'elle désavoue.

Ce n'était certes pas là l'opinion des contemporains de Molière, tant amis qu'ennemis. Leur attitude sur la question, quoique bien connue, mérite d'être rappelée brièvement ici; elle nous éclairera encore sur le sujet, après quoi, nous n'aurons qu'à conclure. Que disent donc nos moralistes, et tout d'abord, les adversaires du poète?

Ses frères et imitateurs ne nous concernent guère; en effet, dans leurs comédies et pamphlets si pleins de jalousie et de fiel, ils se moquent de l'homme, de son jeu, de son accent, de son métier, même de sa vie privée. Mais cela ne prouve rien quant à ses intentions. Ainsi, les *Véritables Précieuses*, la *Comédie Saganarelle* [sic], la *Cocue Imaginaire*, *Zélinde*, la *Vengeance des Marquis*, *L'Impromptu de l'Hôtel de Condé*, même *Elomire hypocondre* n'expliquent clairement que les intentions des ennemis du poète.

Mais les attaques plus sérieuses ne manquent pas. Elles viennent de tous les milieux. Poètes, princes, juges et prélates font chorus pour dénoncer les intentions qu'ils attribuent à Molière. Robinet, dans son "Panégyrique de l'*Ecole des Femmes*," l'Archevêque de Pérefixe, dans son Ordonnance d'Interdiction traitant de *Tartuffe*, le Président de Lamoignon, au sujet de la même pièce, le Seigneur de Rochemont dans sa "Lettre sur le Festin de Pierre," le Prince de Conti, Bourdaloue, Bossuet, et plus tard Fénelon, tous flétrissent les "leçons" des comédies, les "desseins" de Molière, qui cherche "à perdre les hommes," "à corrompre les coeurs," qui "se mêle de prêcher l'Evangile," et n'offre que "la morale du théâtre."

On pourrait ajouter à ces cris les imprécations de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, les plaintes de Brunetiére, de Faguet et de combien d'autres.

Aujourd'hui, nous voyons d'un autre œil la comédie et les comédiens. Seuls quelques fanatiques dénonceraient encore ces derniers comme "empoisonneurs publics." Il nous semble, quand nous voyons protestants, catholiques, jésuites et jansénistes s'attaquer ainsi à Molière, que chacun cherche à "écraser l'infâme" à son profit. Assemblée composite dont chaque membre aurait probablement cherché à excommunier les autres, ils se présentent à nous avec de tels cris, de telles invectives, et un tel manque de charité, que nous pouvons nous demander s'il ne vaudrait pas mieux les renvoyer dos à dos, comme les plaideurs de la fable.

Dans cette explosion de colère sacrée contre Molière, lui seul semble avoir quelque mesure. C'est là précisément ce dont ses ennemis ne voulaient point. Ils réclamaient le sacrifice, et lui n'en voyait pas la nécessité; ils étaient dogmatiques, et lui ne l'était point. Les doctrines de la Renaissance portaient déjà leurs fruits. Cependant, Rabelais lui-même avait mis la raison pour borne à la liberté, et c'est bien ainsi que Molière l'entendait à son tour. Son hétérodoxie n'était pas un plaidoyer en faveur de la licence. Il ne voulait pas plus d'un fanatisme de liberté (comme il l'a montré par ses attaques contre les Précieuses et autres femmes savantes), que d'un fanatisme de bigoterie (ainsi qu'en témoignent *l'Ecole des Femmes* et *Tartuffe*).

Molière suivait le juste milieu, fidèle en cela aux idées du classicisme sur l'usage de la raison. Pour tous ceux qui adoptent ce point de vue-là, les accusations de ses ennemis tombent dans le discrédit qui enveloppe toutes les exagérations et tout le fanatisme.

Si les adversaires de Molière lui reconnaissaient tous l'intention d'enseigner ce qui ne leur plaisait pas, que pensaient donc ses amis et ses partisans?

Nous avons déjà entendu Boileau. La Préface de l'édition de 1682 dit expressément que Molière trouva à propos de supprimer ses premières pièces "lorsqu'il se fut proposé pour but dans toutes ses pièces d'obliger les hommes à se corriger de leurs défauts." Ce passage, pour tendencieux qu'il soit, date d'après la mort de Molière et ne cherche donc pas à le flatter ni à le soutenir. Il marque de plus l'évolution des sentiments de Molière touchant la comédie, un fait que nous avons vu s'élaborer à partir des *Précieuses*. Lafontaine, dans sa lettre à Maucroix du 22 août 1661, le remarque au sujet des *Fâcheux*. En pleine querelle de *L'Ecole des Femmes*, Chapelain recommande Molière au roi pour une pension (que le comédien reçut en effet) et déclare sa morale "bonne." Aurait-il osé le dire, s'il avait craint de sérieuses objections? Quant à Louis XIV, nous savons assez combien il a protégé Molière. Protecteur et patron, parrain du petit Louis, qu'aurait-il pu faire de plus?

La "Lettre sur l'Imposteur" reconnaît à Molière le souci des mœurs et l'héroïsme (pour un écrivain qui cherche à plaire) d'attaquer les maximes et le mauvais goût des contemporains "en faveur de la vertu et de la vérité."

La "Lettre sur le Misanthrope" apporte un témoignage d'autant plus important qu'il vient d'un ancien ennemi de l'auteur. A trois reprises, on y lit que Molière veut parler "contre les mœurs du siècle," et qu'il veut "n'épargner personne." Et, de la pièce même, la "Lettre" déclare:

On peut assurer que cette pièce est une perpétuelle et divertissante instruction. . . . Il n'y a rien dans cette comédie qui ne puisse être uteil et dont l'on ne doive profiter.

On voit par là que nombre de gens en tenaient pour Molière, et pour Molière *réformateur*. C'est ainsi qu'il faut interpréter l'anecdote du Prince de Condé que rapporte Molière lui-même à la fin de sa préface à *Tartuffe*. Là, de même que dans le cas de Chapelain cité plus haut, il faut bien croire que l'histoire est authentique. Molière n'aurait jamais osé se servir d'un tel témoignage, ainsi que de la personne même du roi, si la chose avait été inventée.

Ainsi, des humbles compagnons de Molière aux sommets de la hiérarchie, nous trouvons des témoins qui ont dit, écrit, imprimé, et répété de cent manières leur conviction que Molière faisait œuvre utile, *et qu'il le savait*.

### Conclusion.

A la fin de notre première partie, nous soupçonnions déjà que Molière, auteur non seulement de farces et pièces à incidents, mais encore auteur de comédies de mœurs, avait dû, de par la nécessité même du genre, faire une œuvre morale. Œuvre morale d'un ordre que nous n'avions pas à approuver ou à condamner, car le problème demandait simplement une réponse à la question: La morale de Molière est-elle voulue, ou n'est-elle qu'involontaire et accessoire? Nous avons vu que, sur la foi des œuvres, des critiques comme Michaut et Lanson trouvent que la volonté réformatrice de Molière est progressive, évidente, et indéniable. Cependant, nous n'avons pas voulu accepter leurs dires sans poursuivre à notre tour, notre enquête dans les comédies elles-mêmes. A ce point de notre travail, nous nous sommes contentés de souligner deux faits: le premier, c'est que Molière, à qui tous reconnaissent l'intelligence et le don d'observation, vivait à une époque où les soucis moraux occupaient les esprits, ainsi qu'en témoignent les luttes et querelles du temps, à quoi il faut ajouter les attaques dont il fut l'objet et qu'il ne pouvait ignorer. Le second point, c'est que Molière n'a pas toujours visé à satisfaire son public, mais au contraire, et à plusieurs reprises, il l'a affronté avec une ténacité qui ne saurait être involontaire et accessoire, "en faveur de la vertu et de la vérité" à en croire un de ses anciens ennemis.

L'examen des comédies auquel nous avons consacré notre seconde partie nous a montré des œuvres sans morale, comme certains divertissements: des œuvres en partie immorales, telles que les farces; enfin, onze comédies beaucoup plus importantes et remplies de théories morales sur l'éducation, sur le rôle des femmes dans la société, sur les relations entre mari et femme, ou entre parents et enfants; des tirades philosophiques sur la vie en général, ou en particulier sur la religion, et la dévotion, sur la science et sur l'art de la médecine, sur le théâtre et sur les lettres, sans oublier les idées que Molière émet

sur le théâtre et sur les lettres, sans oublier les idées que Molière émet "bon" père et la "bonne" jeune fille, et la liste n'est pas complète.

C'est dans ces comédies qu'on rencontre les grands raisonneurs, personnages dont le rôle rappelle celui du chœur antique. Leurs arguments sont plus solides, leurs vues plus logiques que les cris spontanés qui échappent aux servantes et aux valets. En outre, ces personnages ne sont point ridicules, ils ne font pas rire, ils sont sympathiques. Au point de vue "comédie," ils sont inutiles. Cependant ils parlent beaucoup, trop même, si Molière ne cherche que le comique. Il ne les ferait parler que pour se protéger? Nous ne le pensons pas, mais même si c'était le cas, ce serait preuve suffisante que Molière savait ce qu'on attendait d'une comédie morale. C'est sans maugréer qu'il a accepté de les faire parler si longuement, ne fût-ce que par politique. Il leur a donné le beau rôle. Enfin, il y a bien d'autres mesures "politiques" qu'il aurait pu prendre et qu'il n'a pas prises. Par exemple, il aurait pu écrire autre chose que *Dom Juan* sitôt après l'alerte de *Tartuffe*. Nous avons vu, de l'aveu même du professeur Lancaster (qui ne croit guère aux intentions réformatrices de Molière) que *Dom Juan* avait donné à celui-ci l'occasion de s'attaquer de nouveau aux hypocrites. C'est le cas de se demander avec Cyrano et Molière: "Que diable allait-il faire à cette galère?"

Ce n'est pas arbitrairement que nous choisissons ces onze pièces et les déclarons beaucoup plus importantes, du point de vue des intentions de Molière. Presque seules, elles ont soulevé les fameuses querelles et les furieuses attaques dont il fut l'objet. D'autres que nous, donc, ont élevé ces œuvres au rang de champion des idées et de la volonté de Molière. (*La Princesse d'Elide* ou *Psyché* par exemple, ne nous pousseraient qu'à regretter de voir Molière prêter la main à des œuvres bâtarde et sans problème.)

Non, ce sont bien les grandes comédies qui contiennent non seulement l'habileté technique de Molière, mais sa substance. Ses thèses, révélées par les titres des pièces, proposent une façon de penser et d'agir. Les comédies ne sont pas qu'un portrait d'une époque.

Quant à l'argument selon lequel des théories du genre de celles de Molière ne sont qu'un reflet des opinions courantes, manquent d'originalité, et par là, ne permettent de voir chez leur auteur aucune intention précise, nous ne croyons pas qu'il soit valide, pour la raison suivante: Où trouve-t-on, au Grand Siècle, la mesure, la modération que prêche Molière? Ni les héros de Corneille, ni les femmes de Racine ne nous en donnent de bien nombreux exemples. Auguste, Titus, et Bérénice sont des exceptions dans leur théâtre. Lafontaine et Boileau sont plus proches de Molière, mais Pascal, mais Bourdaloue

nous prêchent une autre leçon. Les Précieuses et souvent la Cour manquaient de mesure et "donnaient dans l'extravagant." En éducation, en politique, en religion, en littérature, on faisait souvent preuve de parti-pris et de fanatisme.

Nous verrons tout à l'heure ce qu'il faut penser des attaques dirigées contre Molière par ses ennemis. Ils nous éclaireront sur sa morale et nous feront voir qu'on lui reproche de ne pas s'être rangé résolument d'un côté. On ne veut pas de sa mesure. C'est assez dire qu'elle n'était pas populaire, courante, à la mode. C'est assez dire qu'il faisait œuvre originale : Le juste-milieu, moyenne d'une foule d'extrêmes, est l'état le plus rare de tous.

La troisième partie de cette étude examinait les textes mêmes de Molière traitant de ses intentions. Nous avons vu qu'ils sont nombreux et qu'ils concordent tous. Préfaces, comédies, et placets répètent à satiété l'intention continue de l'auteur : il *veut* faire la critique des mœurs. Or, pour questionner sa sincérité ses critiques n'ont que des hypothèses ou leur sentiment personnel. Ils ne bâissent qu'un enchaînement de théories créées de toutes pièces. Ils ont "l'impression"—mais non la preuve—que Molière était avant tout auteur comique sans autre prétention didactique que celle qu'il étaie complaisamment dans les préfaces. Ces mêmes critiques croient qu'il faut voir dans celle de *Tartuffe* une prudence dictée par les mésaventures de la pièce. Mais Molière ne fait que répéter, dans cette préface, les termes mêmes des "Placets" qui, de toute évidence, ont dû précéder la rédaction de la préface à l'édition imprimée de la pièce. Bien plus, ces requêtes ne s'adressaient qu'au roi et n'auraient pas osé lui présenter des arguments spécieux, ou notoirement incorrects. Molière a pu se tromper sur les qualités de sa pièce, mais c'est en toute bonne foi. Du reste, nous savons bien qu'il n'attribue pas à *Tartuffe*, dans ces déclarations, plus de valeur que ne lui accorde le jugement de l'histoire.

Enfin, ce ton apologetique que l'on veut voir dans ces pages, n'avait pas sa place dans les documents antérieurs, écrits dans tout l'enthousiasme des premiers succès. Or, les documents qui suivent la préface des *Précieuses* et les passages de la "Critique" sur lesquels nous avons attiré l'attention, ne font que répéter et confirmer les premières déclarations de Molière.

Il faudrait donc que, tout en étant seulement des arguments de circonstance, les pages de la préface de *Tartuffe* fussent en tous points conformes à ce que Molière a toujours reconnu comme but de son œuvre. On ne saurait lui rendre d'hommage plus éclatant que de voir ainsi chez lui cette continuité d'intention, cette stabilité dans son dessein.

Nous avons enfin rappelé brièvement les attaques contemporaines dont Molière fut l'objet, ainsi que les éloges qui lui furent adressés. Violents, tempétueux, emportés contre lui par un zèle essentiellement dogmatique, ses ennemis ont flétrî l'homme et son œuvre, et l'ont couvert d'anathèmes. Mais, point curieux et à retenir, même en condamnant Molière, ses ennemis ont tous reconnu son intention de moraliser. Leur colère vient de ce que sa morale n'est pas leur morale ; elle ne vient point du fait qu'il n'avait pas de morale ou prétendait n'en pas faire dans ses pièces.

Ainsi la critique même de ses pièces confirme notre sentiment. Elle s'élève contre ce qu' "on peut attendre de la morale du théâtre," pour parler comme Bossuet. En un mot, elle ne proteste pas contre une absence de morale, mais bien contre une intention morale dont elle dénonce l'influence. Cette influence, disent les ennemis de Molière, est pernicieuse et néfaste, parce que ce n'est pas celle de l'Evangile, parce qu'elle ne réclame ni sacrifice, ni ascétisme. Elle n'est pas sublime.

Mais voilà précisément le noeud de la question : le sublime est hors du commun. La comédie, d'autre part, tend à niveler la structure sociale, et non à l'entrainer dans un excès de bassesse ni de grandeur : le "niveau" moral de la comédie est un équilibre moyen. La comédie bourgeoise est une comédie moyenne. Elle est au-dessus de la farce, et sa morale est civique, mais elle n'est pas chrétienne. Elle demande à l'homme de se conformer à la société, et celle-ci, après vingt siècles de christianisme, est encore loin de l'idéal chrétien.

Condamner Molière au nom de la religion chrétienne est donc compréhensible. Mais cela ne veut point dire qu'il n'ait ni idéal, ni morale. Son idéal et sa morale sont ceux du monde. On peut les trouver médiocres, mais cela ne change pas le fait que même ses ennemis lui reconnaissent l'intention de faire de la morale, de "sa" morale.

Car enfin, n'y a-t-il de moralistes que les Chrétiens ? Et ne donnerons-nous ce titre de moraliste qu'aux avocats de la doctrine galiléenne ? Ce serait singulièrement appauvrir l'héritage de l'humanité. Notre propos ici n'est pas d'établir une échelle quantitative ni qualitative de la morale, religieuse ou non, chrétienne ou laïque : notre but est simplement d'établir une intention morale, quelle que soit son étiquette, sa valeur, ou sa source.

Quant aux amis de Molière, leur consentement unanime, sous l'égide de Boileau, reconnaît au comédien l'intention d'instruire en amusant. C'était là une formule que Molière lui-même avait mise dans la bouche d'Ariste dès *L'Ecole des Maris*, sa première comédie d'importance.

"mais je tiens sans cesse  
Qu'il nous faut en riant instruire la jeunesse" (I, 2).

Ainsi donc, l'intelligence de Molière et le milieu où il vivait rendent très improbable son ignorance des fonctions sociales de son art, ou son indifférence à celles-ci. Les comédies, l'auteur surtout, les adversaires et les partisans, tous proclament son intention. Il a compris très tôt l'influence que peut avoir la comédie sur la société dont elle raille les travers. Il s'est servi de cette arme redoutable pour proposer une morale saine, raisonnable, et classique. Il a projeté son génie sur des phases diverses de l'activité humaine, et ses critiques, par le moyen de ses plaisanteries, visent l'exagération, l'extravagance, les abus, passagers ou durables, qui vicient la nature de l'homme.

*University of Washington*



## SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT IN BEOWULF

By HENRY BOSLEY WOOLF

In the introduction to his edition of *Beowulf* Klaeber notes that our greatest Old English poem shows occasional "lack of concord . . . in the interchange of cases, the coupling of a singular verb with a plural subject, the violation, or free handling, of the *consecutio temporum*."<sup>1</sup> And to illustrate the second of these irregularities he gives three references: "with the verb preceding, 1408; with the verb following, 904 f. . . . , and (in a dependent clause) 2163 f."<sup>2</sup> These, however, are by no means all the instances of non-agreement to be found in the poem; and it is the purpose of this paper to point out other examples and other kinds of incongruence between subject and verb—a matter that seems to have been generally overlooked by Beowulfian scholars.<sup>3</sup>

We may begin with the three examples cited by Klaeber, the only ones in *Beowulf* where a noun with plural inflection is used as the subject of a singular verb:<sup>4</sup>

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 904  | Hine sorhwylmas  |
| 905  | lemede tō lange.   |
| 1408 | Oferēode þā æfelinga bearn<br>stēap stānhliðo, stige nearwe,<br>enge ānpāðas, uncūð gelād, |
| 1411 | neowle naessas, nicorhūsa fela.  |
| 2163 | Hýrde ic þāt þām frætwum fēower mēaras<br>lungre, gelice läst weardode,                    |
| 2165 | aappelfealwe.  |

The lack of concord in the first of these passages, Klaeber suggests, "may be explained syntactically, *sorhwylmas* being felt to be equal to *sorh*";<sup>5</sup> however, in 282 a similar compound, *cearwylmas*, is the subject of the plural verb *wurþaþ*. In the second of these passages the subject is a neuter noun which has the same form for both the

<sup>1</sup> Third edition (Boston, 1936), p. xciii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, note 10. See also Klaeber's observations in *MP*, III (1905-06), 259-60.

<sup>3</sup> The most nearly complete treatment of the subject that I have come upon is in Heinrich Bauch's little-known dissertation, *Die Kongruenz in der angelsächsischen Poesie* (Kiel, 1912), pp. 54 ff.

<sup>4</sup> It has not always been thus. For example, Klaeber once took *stānbogan* instead of *eorðreced* as subject of *healde* (2718-9); see *MP*, III, 259.

<sup>5</sup> *Ed. cit.*, p. 165.

singular and plural nominative; and while it may be that we have here to do with a singular used collectively, the plural seems to be the better interpretation in the light of parallels in 1189 and 3170.<sup>6</sup> The third passage differs from the others in that the subject is modified by a numeral; here, surely, there can be no question as to the plurality of the subject.<sup>7</sup>

Klaeber notes that the verbs in each of these passages—*lemede, oferēode, weardode*—“possibly exhibit weakening from normal *-don*,” though he prefers to account for them by lack of concord.<sup>8</sup> It may be noted, however, that one modern editor of the poem, Holthausen, gets concord in the first and third of these passages by emending the verbs.

Another type of non-agreement with plural subject and singular verb occurs rather frequently in relative clauses where the subject of the verb, the particle *þe*, has as its antecedent the genitive plural of the pronoun, *þāra*. There are twelve passages in *Beowulf* with this construction, the following nine of which show non-agreement:<sup>9</sup>

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 841  | Nō his lifgedāl  |
|      | sārlīc þūhte secga ānegum  |
| 843  | þāra þe tīrlēases trode scēawode.                                |
| 994  | Goldfāg scinon   |
|      | web æfter wāgum, wundorsiona fela                                |
| 996  | secga gehwylcum þāra þe on swyld starað.                         |
| 1050 | Dā gȳt āghwylcum eorla drihten                                   |
|      | þāra þe mid Bēowulfe brimlāde tēah,                              |
| 1052 | on þāre medubence māþdum gesalde.                                |
| 1405 | ... magoþegna bær  |
|      | þone sēlestan sāwollēasne  |
| 1407 | þāra þe mid Hrōðgāre hām eahtode.                                |
| 1460 | ... nēfre hit æt hilde ne swāc                                   |
| 1461 | manna āngum þāra þe hit mid mundum bewand.                       |
| 1684 | on geweald gehwearf woroldcyninga<br>ðām sēlestan be sām twēonum |

<sup>6</sup> See Klaeber's remarks in *MP*, III, 259-60; *Anglia*, L (1926), 202. Lawrence (*JEGP*, XXIII [1924], 298) defends the singular, and both Chambers (ed. *Beowulf* [Cambridge, 1914], p. 71) and Sedgefield (ed. *Beowulf*<sup>8</sup> [Manchester, 1935], p. 125) suggest the probability of a singular interpretation.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Beowulf* 59, 1637. Sedgefield (ed. cit., p. 134) curiously suggests that the subject is a collective noun.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. cit., p. lxxxiv. See also Brown, *The Language of the Rushworth Gloss to the Gospel of Matthew and the Mercian Dialect* (Göttingen, 1892), II, 52; Eger, *Dialektisches in den Flexionsverhältnissen der angelsächsischen Bedaübersetzung* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Lines 273b-2735 are somewhat similar, but Klaeber's punctuation makes folccyning the antecedent of *þe*. The three passages that show concord are in lines 98, 785, 937.

- 1686 þāra þe on Scedenigge sceattas dælde.  
 2129 Þat wæs Hrōgāre hrēowa tornost  
 2130 þāra þe lēodfruman lange begēate.  
 2249 . . . gūðdēað fornam,  
     feorhbealo frēcne fýra gehwylcne  
 2251 lēoda mīnra þāra þe þis [lif] ofgeaf.  
 2381 hæfdon hý forhealden helm Scylfinga,  
     pone sēlestān sācyninga  
 2383 þāra þe in Swiorice sinc brytnade.

This particular syntactical construction has been variously commented on and is neither peculiar to the *Beowulf* poet among Old English writers nor to the earliest period of the English language.<sup>10</sup> Here it may be enough to point out that there is no difference between the three clauses that show concord (in each of which *þāra* is dependent on the indefinite pronoun *gehwylc*) and the nine that have non-agreement (with *þāra* dependent on an indefinite pronoun—*ānig, ēghwylc, gehwylc*—or an adjective in the superlative degree—*sēlest, tornost*).

An even more common type of non-agreement in *Beowulf* is that in which a compound subject is used with a singular verb:

- 1008                   Pā wæs sāl ond māl,  
 1009 þæt tō healle gang Healfdenes sunu.  
 1063 Pār wæs sang ond swēg samod ætgædere  
 1064 fore Healfdenes hildewisan.  
 1629 Dā wæs of þām hrōran helm ond byrne  
 1630 lungre ālysed.  
 2105 Pār wæs gidd ond glēo.  
 2461                   . . . þūhte him eall tō rūm,  
 2462 wongas ond wicstede.  
 2472 Pā wæs synn ond sacu Swēona ond Gēata  
 2473 ofer wīd wæter wrōht gemāene.  
 2508                   Nū sceall billes ecg,  
 2509 hond ond heard swoerd ymb hord wigan.  
 2659                   . . . ūrum sceal swoerd ond helm,  
 2660 byrne ond beaduscrūd bām gemāene.

<sup>10</sup> For the use of the construction in Old English, see Nader, "Tempus und Modus im Beowulf," *Anglia*, XI (1889), 474-77; Dietrich, "Zu Cädmon," *ZfdA*, X (1856), 332-33; Wülfing, *Die Syntax in den Werken Alfreds des Grossen* (Bonn, 1894), I, 416-19; Stoecke, *Die Inkongruenz zwischen Subjekt und Prädikat im Englischen und in den verwandten Sprachen* (Heidelberg, 1916), pp. 55 ff. For the origin of the construction, see Kock, *The English Relative Pronouns* (Lund, 1897), pp. 19 ff. For the use of the construction in Modern English, see Curme, *Parts of Speech and Accidence* (Boston, 1935), p. 163.

- 2884 Nū sceal sincþego ond swyrdgifu,  
 eall ēðelwyn ēowrum cynne,  
 2886 lufen ālicean.  
 2999 Pæt ys sio fæhðo ond se fēondscipe,  
 3000 wælnið wera, ðæs ðe ic [wēn] hafo.

In these ten sentences the compound subject usually consists of two nouns joined by the conjunction *ond*. In one (2508b-2509) the compound is made up of three members, though the first and third are practically synonymous. In another (2659b-2660) there are two pairs of two nouns each, with the conjunction linking the two members of each pair. And in one instance (2461b-2462a) one of the nouns is in the plural. In each passage the verb precedes the noun, and generally is preceded in turn by an adverb, a pattern that occasionally makes for lack of concord in Modern English. In several instances the two elements of the compound subject possess the same meaning, as the *pæt* of 2999 clearly shows, and may exist merely to satisfy the demands of alliteration; and when they are not synonymous, they often show an intimate relationship, as in 1629.<sup>11</sup>

Two other passages in the poem with compound subject and singular verb, with predicate preceding subject but without the conjunction joining any of the members of the compound are:

- 1110 Æt þām āde wæs ēþgesyne  
 swātfāh syrce, swýn ealgylden,  
 eofer īrenheard, æþeling manig  
 1113 wundum āwyrded.  
 1243 . . . þær on bence wæs  
 ofer æþelinge yþgesēne  
 heaþostēapa helm, hringed byrne,  
 1246 þrecwudu þrymlie.

Another type of compound subject is that in which the second member of the compound is added after the first element of the compound and the verb have been expressed—almost as an afterthought. In three of the following six passages the verb precedes both members of the compound subject, and in four the second part of the compound comes at the end of the sentence:

<sup>11</sup> There is a parallel in *Beowulf* 1611 to the coupling of *sāl* and *māl* in 1008, which Hoops (*Kommentar zum Beowulf* [Heidelberg, 1932], p. 182) labels "Reimformel." He likewise refers to *synn ond sacu* (2472) as "alliterierende Wendung" (*op. cit.*, p. 263). That the use of a compound subject having "a distinct collective idea, a close union or oneness of idea" is not confined to Old English is well testified to by Curme (*Syntax* [Boston, 1931], p. 55).

- 431 . . . ic möte āna [ond] mīnra eorla gedryht,  
 432 þes hearda hēap, Heorot fālsian.  
 1055 . . . swā hē hyra mā wolde,  
     nefne him witig God wyrd forstōde  
 1057 ond ðæs mannes mōd.  
 1210 Gehwearf þā in Francna fæjm feorh cyninges,  
 1211 brēostgewādu, ond se bēah somod.  
 1671 Ic hit þē þonne gehāte, þæt þū on Heorote mōst  
     sorhlēas swefan mid þinra secca gedryht,  
     ond þegna gehwylc þinra lēoda,  
 1674 duguðe ond iogoþe.  
 1681 . . . ond þā þās worold ofgeaf  
     gromheort guma, Godes andsaca,  
 1683 morðres scyldig, ond his mōdor ēac.  
 2341 Sceolde lāndaga  
     æþeling ærgōd ende gebidan,  
 2343 worulde lifes, ond se wyrn somod.

Thus far I have been concerned only with cases of incongruence in which a plural subject is used with a singular verb. There are, however, two passages in the poem in which a plural verb appears with a singular subject:

- 1030 Ymb þæs helmes hrōf hēafodbeorge  
     wīrum bewunden wala utan hēold,  
     þæt him fēla lāf frēcne ne meahton  
     scūrheard sceþðan, þonne scyldfreca  
 1034 ongēan gramum gangan scolde.  
 1626 Ēodon him þā tōgēanes, Gode þancodon,  
     ðrýðlic þegna hēap, þēodnes gefēgon,  
 1628 þæs þe hī hyne gesundne gesēon mōston.

Three modern editors of *Beowulf* emend the incongruence of the first of these passages out of existence, and two other distinguished scholars change *lāf* to *lāfe*, thereby bringing about proper agreement between subject and verb.<sup>12</sup> In the second of these passages the subject is a collective noun, *hēap*, which presumably is thought of in the light of its several parts, not as a unified whole.

<sup>12</sup> Klauber, Schücking, and Sedgefield change the MS reading *meahton* to *meahte*. Chambers and Holthausen keep the text, the former suggesting that "since *lāf* is collective, it may quite conceivably be the subject of a plural verb" (*ed. cit.*, p. 53). Kock (*Anglia*, XLVI [1922], 78) and Hoops (*op. cit.*, p. 129) change the subject from singular to plural and keep the verb as it stands in the MS.

There are, finally, several passages in *Beowulf* in which a compound verb changes number, generally from singular to plural, without any change in subject at all.<sup>13</sup>

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 171  | Monig oft gesæt<br>rīce tō rūne ; rād eahtedon,                       |
|      | hwæt swiðferhōum sēlest wāre  |
| 174  | wið fārgryrum tō gefremmanne.   |
| 1099 | . . . þæt ðær ānig mon  |
|      | wordum nē worcum wāre ne brāce,                                       |
| 1101 | nē þurh inwitsearo āfre gemānden.                                     |
| 1424 | Fēþa eal gesæt.   |
|      | Gesāwon ðā aeftir wātere wyrmcynnes fela,                             |
| 1426 | sellice sādracan sund cunnian.  |
| 1888 | Cwōm þā tō flōde felamōdigra,<br>hægstealdra [hēap] ; hringnet bāron, |
| 1890 | locene leoðosyrca.  |
| 2249 | . . . gūðdēað fornām,<br>feorhbealo frēcne fýra gehewylcne            |
|      | lēoda minra þāra ðe þis [lif] ofgeaf,                                 |
| 2252 | gesāwon seledrēam.  |
| 2458 | . . . nis þār hearpan swēg,   |
| 2459 | gomen in geardum, swylice ðār iñ wāron.                               |
| 3030 | Weorod eall ārās ;<br>ēodon unblīðe under Earnanes,                   |
| 3032 | wollentēare wundur scēawian.  |

Two of these passages may be called into question: the *ðā* of 1425 I take as an adverb, not as the plural pronoun subject of *gesāwon*,<sup>14</sup> the *unblīðe* of 3031 may, as far as form is concerned, be either adjective or adverb; and if the former (as Klauber has it), then it is an adjective used substantively as the subject. The fact that collective nouns—*fēþa*, *hēap*, *weorod*—are the subjects in three of these passages is of some interest, for even today there is occasional wavering between the idea of oneness and plurality in the collective, and, as Curme remarks, “the point of view sometimes shifts within one and

<sup>13</sup> I omit from consideration the much-discussed passage beginning at 303b. According to some scholars there is faulty concord here, but Malone's discussion (*JEGP*, XXIX [1930], 233), which keeps the inherited text without change, does not show it. Klauber (*MP*, III, 451), though probably wrong on interpretation, is certainly right in saying that a change from plural to singular is “by no means impossible.”

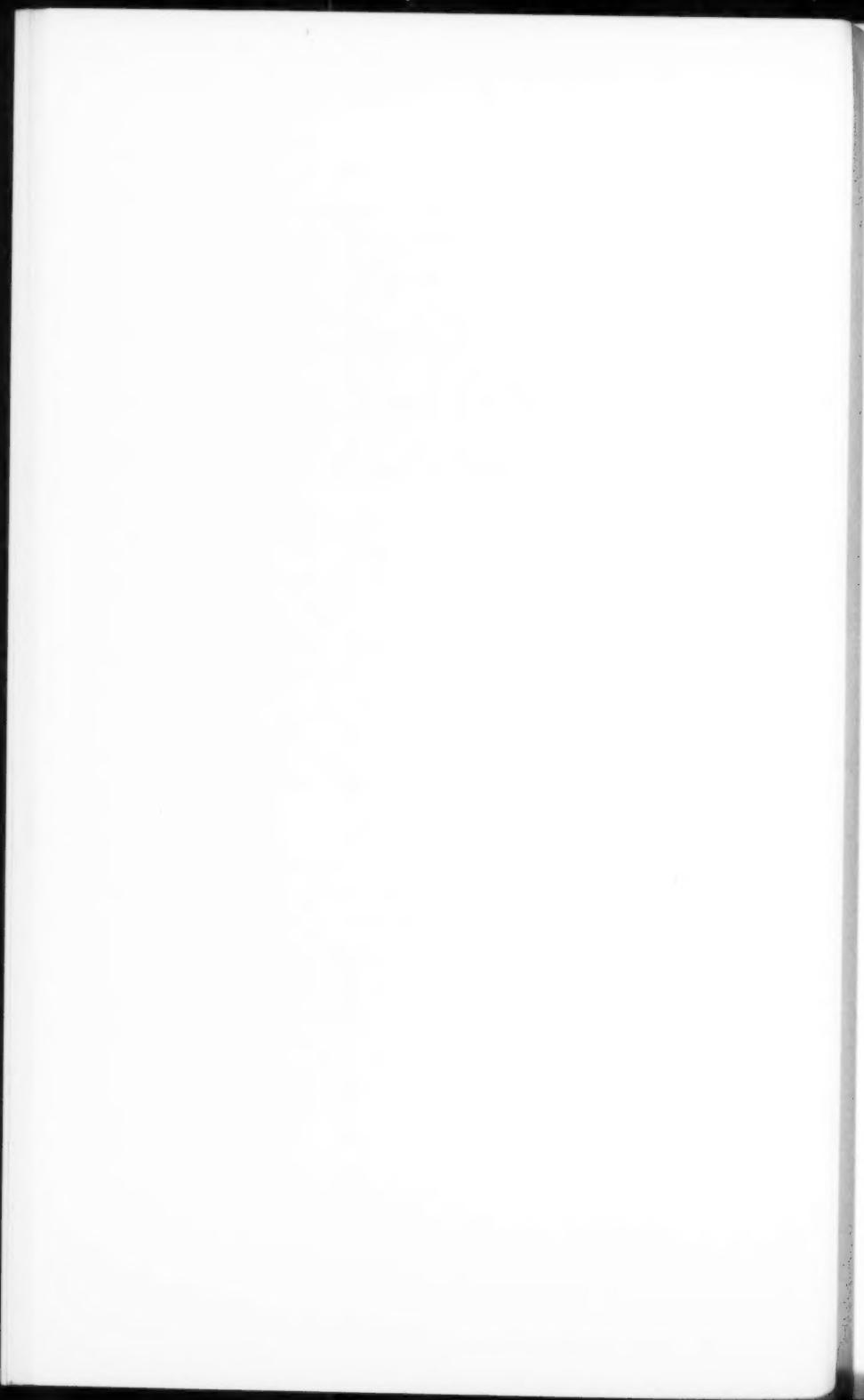
<sup>14</sup> Even if it is a pronoun there is incongruence, though not of the sort with which this paper deals. Rather it is the use of a pronoun in the plural, with singular antecedent (as in 476-77, 794-97). A not dissimilar shift appears in 1240-43.

the same sentence, so that the verb is now singular, now plural, although the reference in the different cases is to the same noun."<sup>15</sup> *Monig* of 171b has, of course, the idea of plurality in it, and the shift from the singular *gesæt* to the plural *eahtedon* is not surprising.<sup>16</sup> Nor does the use of both singular and plural verb with *ænig mon* (1099) seem highly irregular. The passage beginning at 2249b is interesting, for it gives us the incongruent *ofgeaf* after *pāra ðe*, as already noted, and then the more regular *gesāwon*. The shift in 2458b-2459 is somewhat difficult to understand, for there a singular noun, with another singular noun varying it, is used first, as we would expect, with a singular verb and then with a plural—where possibly the two more or less synonymous terms are thought of as distinctly different.

Louisiana State University

<sup>15</sup> *Syntax*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>16</sup> Throughout the poem *monig* is used with the singular, *monige* with the plural. Incidentally, *fela* and *lŷt*, though having the idea of plurality in them, always appear in *Beowulf* with a singular verb.



## WAS WILLIAM LANGLAND A BENEDICTINE MONK?

By MORTON W. BLOOMFIELD

Allan H. Bright<sup>1</sup> has convincingly identified the "Willelmus de Colewell" who was ordained an acolyte at the parish church of Bromyard, by John de Trillek, Bishop of Hereford,<sup>2</sup> on December 20, 1348, with William Langland, author of *Piers Plowman*. It is impossible to confirm absolutely that identification, but it is eminently reasonable. Probably illegitimate, William used both the name of his natal parish, Colwall, and that of Longland or Langland, a large arable field, a "place where he had spent many years of his life and which may have been connected with his mother's family."<sup>3</sup> Bright's explanation of the shift from one name to the other is unconvincing,<sup>4</sup> but it is possible that William used both, Langland for his inflammable writings and Colwall for other purposes. This, of course, is a sheer guess.

In volume III of *Documents Illustrating the Activities of the General and Provincial Chapters of the English Black Monks, 1215-1540*,<sup>5</sup> in one of the extant membranes recording the proceedings of Uhtred of Boldon's visit to the Monastery at Whitby (October 12, 1366) as a special investigator of the evils reported by the regular June visitors, there is preserved a reference to a "Willelmus Colvill" who was fined five shillings, presumably because of his part in the disturbances. The name occurs in a list of the Monastery inhabitants who were so punished. The part of the document of interest to us reads :

Item recepit de nativis monasterii de Whitby . . .  
Item recepit de . . . de Willelmo Colvill v s. . .<sup>6</sup>

The question arises whether there is any possibility of identifying this William Colvill with the William Colewell in Trillek's *Register*. There were, no doubt, many fourteenth-century William Colwalls, although surprisingly enough, the name is exceedingly rare in

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of his views which appeared earlier in various letters to *TLS*, see his *New Light on "Piers Plowman,"* with a preface by Professor R. W. Chambers (London, 1928).

<sup>2</sup> See *Registrum Johannis de Trillek, Episcopi Herefordensis A. D. 1344-1361*, ed. J. H. Perry (Canterbury and York Society, London, 1912), p. 476 and Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> Bright, *op. cit.*, p. 66. He may also have used the surname Rokayle, the name of his natural father.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Ed. W. A. Pantin, *Camden, Third Series*, LIV (London, 1937).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

the archives and records of the period. It is impossible, of course, at this late date, to prove that the two references apply to one and the same man. Further evidence, however, might strengthen the suggestion here put forth that they do refer to the poet.

In order to argue that the inhabitant of Whitby Monastery was William Langland, the following must be established: (1) the orthographic correspondence of Colewell and Colvill, (2) the heuristic value of the identification, and (3) the absence of any serious objection, on the basis of our present state of knowledge, to the attribution. My whole argument, however, rests upon one unproved assumption—that Bright's assertions about Langland, especially his use of the surname Colwall, as recorded in the first paragraph of this article, are correct. These assertions have gained considerable support from all Langland scholars.

(1) There is no difficulty in equating Colewell and Colvill. Although medieval Latin scribes in using English or non-Latin words containing a "w" would usually preserve that letter, numerous cases of the use of "v" for "w" in such words are, however, to be found.<sup>7</sup> The purists, probably, would transcribe the "w" with a "v." Others who were less precise or precious, and they include the great majority, would use the foreign letter. In the unaccented second syllable, the indistinct front vowel could be equally well rendered by "i" or "e." On orthographical grounds, then, the two forms could well represent the same word.

(2) What are the advantages of assuming that Langland was connected, possibly as a monk, with a Benedictine monastery? They may be listed as three. The assumption of Langland's association with the Black Monks helps to explain (a) the mildness of his satire against the monks as compared with all other social and ecclesiastical classes, (b) his apparent support of Uhtred de Boldon in his famous quarrel with the friars, and especially with William Jordan, Dominican, and (c) the Augustinian bias, mingled with a vague anti-Thomism, of Langland's philosophical position.

(a) It has been noted by a considerable number of the readers of *Piers Plowman* that Langland treats the monastic orders with more mildness than the other classes.<sup>8</sup> One has only to look at Skeat's

<sup>7</sup> See Du Cange, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, under *Walla*, *Wantus*, *Warantus*, *W'reckum*, etc. and Baxter and Johnson, *Medieval Latin Word-list from British and Irish Sources* (London, 1934), under *Wastallus*, *Walettus*, *Wainabilis*, *Wangardia*, etc.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., M. E. Marcett, *Uhtred de Boldon, Friar William Jordan, and "Piers Plowman"* (New York, 1938), p. 64 and D. Chadwick, *Social Life in the Days of Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1922), chapter I.

Index to Proper Names and Subjects given at the end of his combined two-volume edition of the poem, under the word "friars" and then under "monks" to ascertain Langland's consideration for the monks.<sup>9</sup> Thomas Wright went so far as to suggest that "it appears to be generally agreed that a monk was the author of the poem of Piers Ploughman,"<sup>10</sup> although I don't know among whom such agreement obtained. In any case, the assumption that Langland was connected in some way with an order of monks would explain this trait in his work. Fourteenth-century moralists, generally, did not deal gently with monastics. If Langland were a monk or connected with a monastery, we can understand his diffidence in attacking his brothers.

(b) Mildred Elizabeth Marcett in her very valuable dissertation, *Uhtred de Boldon, Friar William Jordan, and "Piers Plowman"* has explained a hitherto meaningless line in the B and C texts of the poem, and has contributed toward an elucidation of the whole scene in Passus XIII, 21-201 (B-text).<sup>11</sup> Lines 83 and 84 run:

I shal Iangle to þis Iurdun · with his Iust wombe,  
To tell me what penaunce is · of which he  
preached rather.

These lines certainly contain a personal thrust at Friar William Jordan, the bitter enemy of Uhtred de Boldon. In fact the whole scene of the dinner in the house of Conscience seems to fit in with this interpretation. The Doctor is a Dominican friar, and Will's thrust and pun were directed at him. Miss Marcett's arguments seem quite conclusive.

Now, the hypothesis advanced here will explain why Langland should take Boldon's side in his attack on the friars and William Jordan in particular. It is obvious that Langland, if he were a Benedictine, would support the polemics of the greatest English Benedictine of his age against a notorious opponent. The quarrel between the two broke out in 1366, just before or just after Uhtred's visit to the Whitby Monastery. It would be known to all the inhabitants of that monastic house. In fact, the first reference to their quarrel occurs in a letter concerning the results of Boldon's October visitation, dated c. 8 December, 1366.<sup>12</sup> It may even be that Langland knew Uhtred personally. In any case he admired him sufficiently to

<sup>9</sup> Vol. II, pp. 477 and 480. There is no attack on the monks in the poem equal in fury to those in B XX, 261 ff. and X, 307 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman*, Second and Revised Edition (London, 1856), vol. I, p. ix.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

dislike his opponent. If we assume that Langland had Benedictine connections at least, Miss Marcett's important discovery falls into its proper place in our fragmentary biography of Langland.

(c) Much ecclesiastical politics entered into the reception the Dominican philosophers got. The greatness of Albertus and Thomas had to break through a crust of opposition from both the Franciscans and the monks. The Platonic-Augustinian tradition and Scotism, which may or may not be placed in that tradition, both set themselves against the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, an opposition which even Leo XIII's espousal of Thomas has not entirely removed in our time. The alleged Augustinianism<sup>13</sup> and Scotism<sup>14</sup> of Langland raise issues which cannot be discussed here, but it may at least be said that there is some evidence that Langland was not a Thomist. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that he was anti-Thomistic,<sup>15</sup> although that may be true, but certainly he shows a tendency to follow Scotus and to admire Augustine.

If the truth of the suggestion put forth here is assumed, this general philosophical tone receives an explanation. Of course, it must be emphasized that Scotism or Augustinianism do not imply monkhood. Langland could very well be opposed to the Dominican philosophers and be at the same time only an acolyte or clerk or anything else. But what I have to say could give us a reason for his attitude.

(3) Is there any definite information about Langland that would clash with the identification of him as William Colvill, a resident of the Benedictine Monastery at Whitby on October 12, 1366? At present, a definite negative answer can be given to this question. The only possible objection to this identification turns out, on closer inspection, not to be one at all. Langland was well acquainted with London and with the Parliamentary and succession problems at the end of Edward III's reign. But he may well have lived in London between 1349 and 1366, or at any time after 1366, or both before and after 1366. It may be that Langland did not become a full-fledged monk. It may be that he gave up the attempt after a trial before tak-

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., B X, 116 ff., 241 ff., 452 ff.; XIV, 315 ff.; and XV, 37.

<sup>14</sup> See Mabel Day, "Duns Scotus and *Piers Plowman*," *RES*, II (1927), 333 ff. and George Sanderlin, "The Character *Liberum Arbitrium* in the C-Text of *Piers Plowman*," *MLN*, LVI (1941), 449 ff.

<sup>15</sup> The whole question of Langland's philosophical point of view needs a thorough study. Besides the articles quoted in the preceding note, T. P. Dunning, "*Piers Plowman*: An Interpretation of the A-Text" (Dublin, 1937), and Greta Hort, *Piers Plowman and Contemporary Religious Thought* (London, n. d. [1937?]), can be profitably studied in this connection. B X, 180 ff., XI, 213 ff. and XII, 17 ff. are probably attacks on late Thomistic scholasticism. These passages are perhaps so vague as to mean little.

ing full vows. It may be that he never intended to become a monk at all, but only lived in the Monastery. It may be, too, that he did become a monk and watched the world from Whitby or some other house and gained his knowledge of London before 1366. It may even be that he became a monk and was allowed to live out of a house or in a house in or near London. The possibilities are endless, but in any case, nothing said in this article contradicts a knowledge of London and its political and court life on Langland's part.

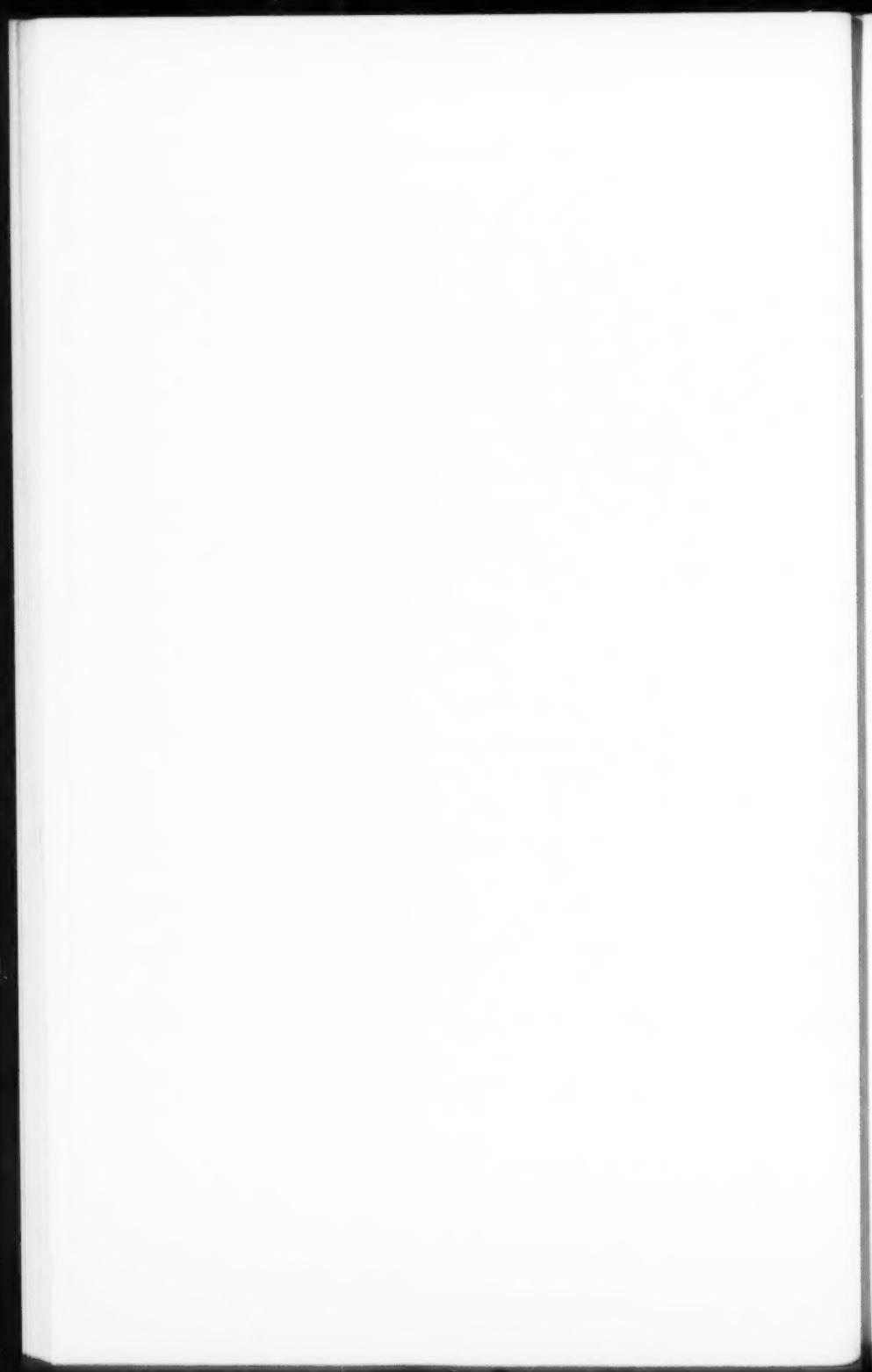
In a practically empty biography, such as Langland's really is, any information that may possibly bear on the mystery of the life of a great poet deserves consideration. Mathematically speaking, the argument presented here rests on a very slight probability. From the point of view of internal suitability, it is stronger. In any case, it may, perhaps, lead to new discoveries which will tell us something more about this strange fourteenth-century poet who may have spent some time in a Yorkshire monastery of the Benedictines in 1366. Perhaps Langland knew whereof he spoke when he uttered these wistful and oft-quoted lines:

For if hevene be on this erthe · and ese to  
any soule,  
It is in cloistere or in scole · be many  
skilles I fynde;  
For in cloistre cometh no man · to chide ne  
to fȝste,  
But alle is buxumnesse there and bokes · to  
rede and to lerne.<sup>16</sup>

*University of Akron*

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<sup>16</sup> B X, 300-303.



## PLATONISM IN WILLIAM GODWIN'S *POLITICAL JUSTICE*

By F. E. L. PRIESTLEY

William Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* is usually approached as a document belonging wholly or at least mainly in the tradition of the empirical philosophy; its author is customarily described as a disciple of Locke, Helvetius, and Hartley,<sup>1</sup> and we hear almost as much of his intellectual indebtedness to these writers as of his more mundane levies upon Shelley. The readiness to believe in the derivative quality of his thought, and the apparently established conviction that the derivation is strictly from the empiricists, have tended to obscure some of the more obvious facts about *Political Justice* and its doctrines.<sup>2</sup>

In the first place, page after page of *Political Justice* will furnish references to "abstract and immutable truth," or "immortal and ever present truth."<sup>3</sup> Occasionally the author makes the distinction between absolute, abstract virtue, and relative, practical virtue; between the qualities of an action "absolutely considered," and "relatively."<sup>4</sup>

This is the same distinction as that made by Richard Price, who, like Godwin, preaches absolute right and wrong, often in the language of utility.<sup>5</sup> The insistence upon absolute and eternal truth means a rejection of the moral relativity of the Utilitarians, and places Godwin with the Platonic rationalists rather than with the empiricists, with Cudworth and Clarke rather than with Hobbes and Helvetius. It is true that he, like the rationalist Price, uses the phrases of the Utilitarian; he is fond of repeating in proper Helvetician style that morality is nothing but a calculation of consequences, but he is not willing to admit that our calculation of consequences can constitute in itself right or wrong: "Private judgment and public deliberation are not the standard of right and wrong; they are only the means of discovering these."<sup>6</sup> "The most crowded forum, or the

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Driver, C. H., "William Godwin," in *The Social and Political Ideas of . . . the Revolutionary Age* [ed. Hearnshaw] (London, 1931), p. 146; Halévy, E., *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* [tr. Morris] (London, 1934), p. 193; Roussin, H., *William Godwin* (Paris, 1913), pp. 178 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Further confusion has been introduced by the strange insistence by writers in English upon using the edition of 1793 as their text. Writers in German have been more discriminating.

<sup>3</sup> *Political Justice* (1798), IV, vi.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *Political Justice* (1798), IV, vi, App. 1.

<sup>5</sup> See Lincoln, A., *Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent* (Cambridge, 1938), chap. IV.

<sup>6</sup> *Political Justice* (1796), III, iv.

most venerable senate, cannot make one proposition to be a rule of justice, that was not substantially so previously to their decision. They can only interpret and announce that law which derives its real validity from a higher and less mutable authority.<sup>7</sup> There can be no human authority so paramount "as to have the prerogative of making that to be law, which abstract and immutable justice had not made to be law previously to that interposition."<sup>8</sup> The unchanging truths of the universe, if known, must dictate actions which will produce the greatest good, but since all human judgments are fallible, no judgment or multiplicity of judgments as to the utility of an action will necessarily reveal its relation to universal truth; still less will multiplicity or even universality of judgment constitute universal truth. Utility may be permitted to be the criterion of virtue, as for all practical purposes it must be; but it is not its essence.

In the second place, there is a fundamental cleavage between Godwin and the Utilitarians in their views on the nature of motives to action. Here again Godwin adheres to the Platonic tradition by insisting on the motive power of reason. "Every principle which can be brought home to the conviction of the mind will infallibly produce a correspondent effect upon the conduct."<sup>9</sup> Reason not only judges the rightness of an action or the desirability of an end, but irresistibly urges towards that action or towards the pursuit of that end; it is not merely cognitive, but has an appetitive aspect. From this point of view the problem of morality is simply a problem of recognition; virtue and right reason are one; vice is simply error: "A vicious conduct is always the result of narrow views";<sup>10</sup> "a powerful understanding is inseparable from eminent virtue,"<sup>11</sup> and it is impossible that eminent virtue should exist in a weak understanding. Vice is *hamartia*, a "bad shot," a miscalculation of consequences. Either the consequences anticipated do not follow, or consequences anticipated as pleasant are not pleasant. In either case the fault is one of judgment, and proceeds from "narrow views." Insofar as an action proceeds from an intention conceived within a narrow intellectual framework it is bad; it is good insofar as it proceeds from one which takes in many points of view and becomes objective. This is what Godwin means when he speaks of "going out of our selves," and becoming "impartial spectators of the system of which we are a part."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Political Justice* (1798), II, v.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, V, i.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, v.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, v, App.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, cf. VI, iii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, x.

It is of especial importance to recognize Godwin's separation in these basic particulars from the empirical philosophers usually named as his sources, since it is upon these bases that his whole scheme of rational progress rests. His is a scheme of progress through enlightenment; there can be no enlightenment of the senses; if the appeal of reason is not stronger than direct sensual appeal, then the future condition of man is hopeless. The only mode by which a scheme of perfectibility through rational means can operate is this: that it be assumed that the rational structure of the universe is virtue itself; that courses of action should be selected by the individual as a result of a judgment of the logical consistency of such courses with a system of immutable truths; that such a judgment should become a motive once it is seen to fit in with the larger system. All progress demands some external standard towards which progress is made, and to which all is relative; rational progress demands as this external standard a scheme of absolute truths, truths which can be discovered by a process of reasoning. This is, in essence, Godwin's doctrine of progress; it is also, in essence, Platonic. Godwin himself makes it quite clear in a footnote that his is not simply the system of perfectibility offered by Condorcet, which is based on a faith in the steady improvement of the arts and sciences. The historical evidence of material progress is to be recognized and valued, of course, but Godwin rests his hopes not so much "upon the growing perfection of art," as upon "the immediate and unavoidable operation of an improved intellect."<sup>13</sup>

The scheme of rational progress which is, with the possible exception of his digressions on marriage and longevity, the best known of Godwin's doctrines, rests ultimately on premises which owe nothing to Hartley and Helvetius, but which are derived from the long tradition of Platonic rationalism. Moreover, from this central doctrine of the nature of rational progress, and its corollaries of the rational nature of virtue, of the universality of truth, and of the motive power of reason, all the rest of Godwin's main teachings are deduced.

His political philosophy is based on the convictions that politics is a branch of morality, that morality must be rational, and that the development of a rational morality demands free play for reason. The function of government becomes solely the securing of that free play to the individual reason through which alone each individual can realize his potentialities; its function can never be the positive one of "educating" its citizens in the Helvetician sense:<sup>14</sup> that is, of

<sup>13</sup> *Political Justice* (1798), VIII, ix, App.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Helvetius, *De l'Homme [Oeuvres, vol. 2]* (Paris, 1813), X, iii.

bribing and punishing them into conformity without assent. The difficult problem of rights is solved simply by reference to the main premises. Rights are not a legal inheritance, nor a political demand; man has fundamentally one right: the right to freedom from interference. "Man is changed from the capable subject of illimitable excellence into the vilest and most despicable thing that imagination can conceive, when he is restrained from acting upon the dictates of his understanding."<sup>15</sup> The negative or passive right to pursue, through the free exercise of rational choice, all the excellence of which he is capable, is man's one right. The good society is that which affords him the greatest freedom to acquire virtue. Quite clearly, under present circumstances, some political interference through some form of government is necessary, even though in the absolute sense all restriction is an evil. It may be hoped, however, that at some remote period man will become sufficiently enlightened to make government superfluous. Then, and not before then, government may be abandoned.<sup>16</sup> This is the modest extent of Godwin's anarchism, which is simply a logical deduction from his rationalist premises.

It is true that the *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* draws upon more than one tradition; Godwin's own notes indicate a wide and heterogeneous variety of sources. But throughout the intricate and variegated texture of its thought-pattern runs an unmistakable and uniform warp; beneath the apparently eclectic architecture lies a solid foundation; the basic assumptions of Godwin's doctrines derive from the Platonic tradition. Godwin is, in fact, undertaking a task not unlike Plato's. In the *Republic*, Plato is seeking justice "writ large" in the state, "the state as the adequate condition for moral integrity, for the health and integrity of the individual soul."<sup>17</sup> The *Republic* is not so much a book in politics, as in morals. So, likewise, Godwin is conducting an enquiry concerning political justice, a consideration of the state as the adequate condition for moral integrity, and his book concerns morals rather than politics. His conclusion is the same as Plato's: "Only when the rule of man is the rule of reason . . . can one hope for a just state where the individual may live a just life."<sup>18</sup>

What has been said about the state and the government is not a mere dream, and although difficult not impossible, but only possible in the way which has been supposed; that is to say, when the true philosopher kings are born in a state, one or more of them, despising

<sup>15</sup> *Political Justice* (1798), VIII, ii.

<sup>16</sup> See *ibid.*, VII, v, for an emphatic assertion of a doctrine of gradualism.

<sup>17</sup> Edman, I. (ed.), *The Works of Plato* (New York, 1934), p. xl.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

the honours of this present world which they deem mean and worthless, esteeming above all things right and the honour that springs from right, and regarding justice as the greatest and most necessary of all things.<sup>19</sup>

Godwin's hopes depend on "the man who vigilantly conforms his affections to the standard of impartial justice, who loses the view of personal regards in the greater objects that engross his attention, who from motives of benevolence sits loose to life and all its pleasures . . ."<sup>20</sup>

If, as even this brief presentation would seem to show, the fundamentals of Godwin's thought are derived not from the empirical, but from the Platonic rationalist tradition, there remains only the question of how Godwin derived them. Platonic elements in his work have been pointed out by H. N. Brailsford in his *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*. Brailsford selects as Platonic Godwin's belief that "the voluntary actions of men originate in their opinions," his attack on the traditional conceptions of the punishment of crime, and his conviction that politics is "the proper vehicle of a liberal morality." But in each case he is careful to add to his indication of apparent Platonic influence the warnings that "Godwin was no Platonist,"<sup>21</sup> that "Godwin was not a student of Plato,"<sup>22</sup> that "in several of his fundamental tenets Godwin was a Platonist without knowing it."<sup>23</sup> This assumption of ignorance is not easy to maintain. Godwin was a member of the circle which included Richard Price, who stands in the direct line of inheritance, through Cudworth and Clarke, of the English Platonic tradition. Godwin's tutor at Hoxton, Alexander Kippis, also a friend of Price, was an admirer of Shaftesbury and contributed a life of Shaftesbury to the *Biographia Britannica*. Godwin himself quotes Shaftesbury more than once.<sup>24</sup> But it is not necessary to establish even these likely sources of second-hand knowledge of Platonism. Godwin's diary shows that in 1791, when the *Political Justice* was being planned and started, he was reading Greek philosophy.<sup>25</sup> That this reading included Plato is made clear by certain passages in *Political Justice*. In the first edition, composed soon after the reading of Greek philosophy which Godwin mentions, he writes:

The truths of general nature, those truths which preceded, either substantially or in the nature of things, the particular existences that

<sup>19</sup> *Republic*, VII.

<sup>20</sup> *Political Justice* (1798), IV, x.

<sup>21</sup> Brailsford, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle* (London, 1913), p. 126.

<sup>22</sup> Brailsford, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> Brailsford, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., *Political Justice* (1798), I, v.

<sup>25</sup> Paul, C. K., *William Godwin* (London, 1876), vol. 1, p. 68.

surround us, and are independent of them all, are inexhaustible. Is it possible that a knowledge of these truths, the truths of mathematics, of metaphysics and morals, the truths which, according to Plato's conception, [Godwin's note: "See the *Parmenides*."] taught the creator of the world the nature of his materials, the result of his operations, the consequences of all possible systems in all their detail, should not exalt and elevate the mind?<sup>26</sup>

It would be difficult to find a clearer indication of conscious Platonic influence than this passage affords. Although the phrasing "substantially, or in the nature of things" permits a choice between the Platonic view of the forms (or "truths of general nature") as transcendent, and the Aristotelian view of them as immanent, the following sentence, with its expansion of the Platonic view, and its footnote referring to the *Parmenides*, shows a preference for the transcendental view, for a belief in a separate world of universals, existing independently of the Creator, and serving as a formal cause in the process of creation. The mention of the *Parmenides* is of particular interest, since in that dialogue the forms are metaphysical essences, the Conceptualist view being specifically rejected. It is perhaps also to Godwin's purpose that Socrates professes most certainty concerning those forms which correspond to ethical notions.<sup>27</sup> Otherwise, although the *Parmenides* discusses the doctrine of forms and the problem of participation, the account given in the passage from *Political Justice* of the part played by the forms in creation recalls rather the *Timaeus*: God is the *efficient* cause of the world, but the *formal* cause is "not God, but the 'intelligible living creature' . . . which God contemplates as the model for his work."<sup>28</sup> The *Timaeus* doctrine appears in other passages, and in the second as well as the first edition. We read, for example, that

Upon the hypothesis of a God it is not the choice, apprehension or judgment of that being, so properly as the truth which was the foundation of that judgment, that has been the source of all contingent and particular existences. His existence, if necessary, was necessary only as the sensorium of truth and the medium of its operation.<sup>29</sup>

And again:

The office of the principle, whether mind or whatever else, to which the universe owes its existence, is less that of fabricating than conducting; is not the creation of truth, and the connecting circum-

<sup>26</sup> *Political Justice* (1793), IV, iv.

<sup>27</sup> *Parmenides*, 132b-c; 130b-d. See also Taylor, A. E., *Plato* (New York, 1936), pp. 353 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 442.

<sup>29</sup> *Political Justice* (1796), IV, viii.

stances and events which had no original relation to each other, but the serving as a medium by which truth, the nature of which is unalterable, might become an active and operating principle.<sup>80</sup>

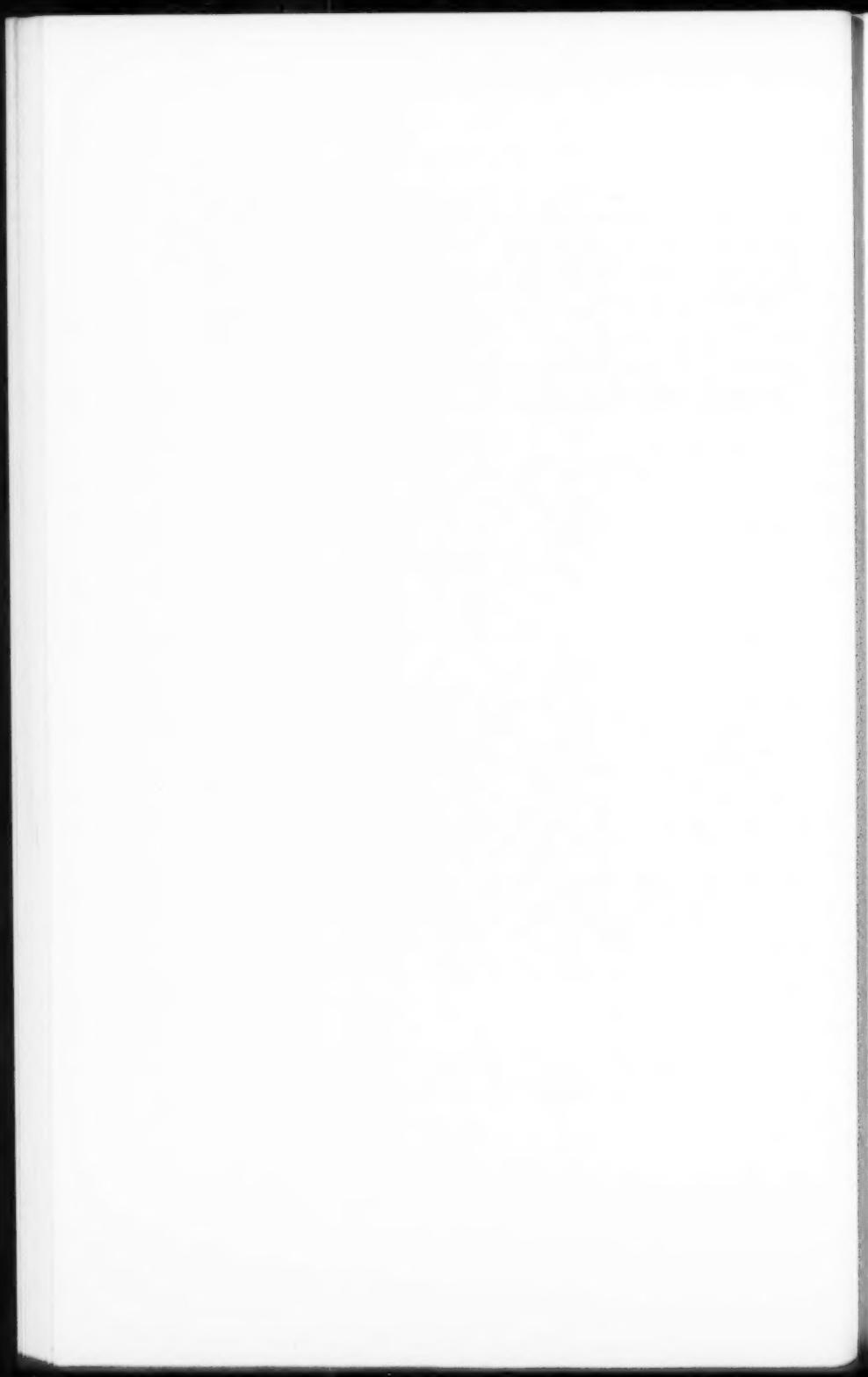
It will be noted that Godwin does not adopt the neo-platonic subordination of the "forms" to the Creator.

These selections from the *Political Justice* seem sufficiently specific to leave no doubt that Godwin was influenced by the Platonic tradition, and that the influence was deliberate and conscious.

*University of British Columbia*

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<sup>80</sup> *Political Justice* (1796), VII, i.



## A NATIONAL LITERATURE: POST-CIVIL WAR DECADE

By BENJAMIN T. SPENCER

That after each demonstration of national power in the early decades of the Republic a demand arose for a national literature commensurate with America's growing political prestige has become a commonplace of American literary history. With cumulative force and intensity the demand swept the nation after the Revolution, again after the War of 1812, and probably reached its most nearly unanimous and confident expression in the 1830's after the Jacksonian ascendancy.<sup>1</sup> Little systematic inquiry has been made into the effects of the fourth great demonstration of national power (the Union victory in the Civil War) on the sentiment for a national literature. It is the purpose of this article to trace the nature and course of such sentiment in the important decade following 1865 when the United States apparently had reached new heights of national strength and confidence.

In previous decades the concepts of a national literature had been varied, but their tendency had been to accent America's political and literary independence of England, her physical resources, the grandeur of her landscapes, the romance and heroism of her past, and the sturdy self-reliance of her citizens.<sup>2</sup> With the freeing of the slaves after the Civil War, the demand arose for a literature which would express as the distinctive feature of the American scene, the humanitarian temper demonstrated by the Northern triumph. It was not a new theme among the desiderata for a national literature, but its dominance distinguished the literary nationalism of the post-Civil War decade from those which had preceded it. Even during the early progress of the war, when "to wonder whether there will ever be an American poem, an American symphony, or an American Organon" was merely a sign of weakness in a period of great deeds, one prophet, John Weiss, already could foresee a post-war national unity involving "such a rich development of the intellectual action as the Old World has not seen." He believed that the "excitement of national intellectual life . . . will take on the various forms of a national literature."<sup>3</sup> The "Republican

<sup>1</sup> See J. C. McCloskey, "The Campaign of Periodicals after the War of 1812 for National American Literature," *PMLA*, L (1935), 262-73; and B. T. Spencer, "A National Literature, 1837-1855," *American Literature*, VIII (1936), 125-59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, IX (1862), 681-2.

Soul" is aroused with great ideas, already, he felt, to establish the Commonwealth of God; and from this heightened sense of destiny Americans will become a People from whose renascent literature mere rhetoricians and cliques will vanish.<sup>4</sup>

Although Weiss's expectations of a literary renascence were not to be fulfilled in the decade after the war, there were not lacking literary patriots to further and to elaborate his conception. With a united nation, confident in its prospect of increasing progress and well-being and assured of its own social righteousness in the emancipation of the slaves, a concern for a national literature revived. Even Melville was led to voice the hope that fulfillment might "verify in the end those expectations which kindle the bards of Progress and Humanity."<sup>5</sup> In character this post-war literary nationalism was less ardent and naive than that of the Jacksonian era. Of both its restraint and its humanitarian temper T. W. Higginson, in the forties an illustrious proponent of an American literature, is perhaps the most representative spokesman.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after the conclusion of the war, Higginson, analyzing America's failure to produce great national literature, found its absence partially due to the lack of "an atmosphere of sympathy in intellectual aims." Not only with the avoidance of superficiality in our institutions and of all affectation and self-praise, he said, but also with the realization that the laws of art are the same for the whole human race, with the mastering and remolding rather than the defying of tradition, would American literature come into its own and perfect the utterance of the new spirit of grandeur which the Civil War had given the nation.<sup>7</sup> Thus, convinced on the one hand of the great humanitarian significance of the Union victory, and on the other hand holding in increasing veneration the literary classics of Europe, Higginson demanded the influence of both on the new American literature. "We . . . need to go abroad for our standard of execution, but our ideal and our faith must be our own."<sup>8</sup> The Americanism of the author, he asserted, is not to be ascertained by his refusal to read Dante, but by "whether he believes the world to be young or old," by whether he sees infinite scope for his own inspiration.<sup>9</sup> His opposition to Whitman's conception of a national literature followed his conviction that most American writers sought "originality in mere externals" and that America does not need "new

<sup>4</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, IX (1862), 681-2.

<sup>5</sup> *John Marr and Other Poems* (Princeton, 1922), p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> See B. T. Spencer, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 ff., and T. W. Higginson, *Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (Boston, 1891), pp. 139-40.

<sup>7</sup> "A Plea for Culture," *Atlantic Monthly*, XIX (1867), 33-37.

<sup>8</sup> "Literature as an Art," *Atlantic Monthly*, XX (1867), 754; see also XIX (1867), 37.

<sup>9</sup> "Americanism in Literature," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXV (1870), 63.

literary forms . . . but only fresh inspiration, combined with cultivated taste." Hence he deplored the ovation given Artemus Ward in London and said of Whitman that it was no discredit "that he wrote 'Leaves of Grass,' only that he did not burn it afterwards."<sup>10</sup>

Despite America's cultural immaturity, Higginson felt that through the flexibility and earnestness of the American mind American literature was "sure to come to ripeness at last."<sup>11</sup> As for its "fresh inspiration," that should come from a democratic positiveness of faith, from the hearty enthusiasm of the common man, from the acceptance of our own American life; and these qualities must be embodied in any literature truly national.<sup>12</sup> Thus, like Whitman of whom he disapproved, Higginson emphasized the function of literature in bespeaking national idealism and redeeming America from materialism. Admitting that American literature was still digesting its materials, he prophesied its future greatness growing out of the oxygen of liberty and the heroic energy and inspiration of the nation's life in all its spheres, its great classless society and its Puritan inheritance. The previous laudable use of American themes and subjects was but a mere preparation "for the higher triumphs to be won by a profounder treatment,—the introduction into literature of the American spirit."<sup>13</sup> Thus, by making it central in a national literature, Higginson reflected the post-war faith in Union and democracy: "To analyze combinations of character that only our national life produces, to portray dramatic situations that belong to a clearer social atmosphere—this is the higher Americanism."<sup>14</sup>

To John Burroughs, in 1868, Higginson wrote a series of letters attempting to establish his position that native force and high polish in American literature were compatible, and objecting to Whitman as not combining "cosmopolitan culture and indigenous strength."<sup>15</sup> But Burroughs consistently and cogently upheld Whitman's identification of America and Nature, asserting that Nature is capable of supplying a great American literature, that "Nature affords the only adequate standard for a first-class modern artist."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Literature as an Art," *loc. cit.*, pp. 752-53.

<sup>11</sup> "A Plea for Culture," *loc. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> "Americanism in Literature," *loc. cit.*, pp. 56 ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> *Life and Letters of John Burroughs*, ed. Clara Barrus (Boston and New York, 1925), I, 137-38.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138. See also I, 217. On this basis Burroughs defended *Leaves of Grass* for many decades, his devotion to Whitman culminating in a full length tribute in 1896. Yet that study is not altogether germane to the present discussion, not only because its date lies outside the period under consideration but also because Burroughs' confessed disinclination toward political and civil affairs (cf. *Life and Letters*, II, 292) tended to minimize Whitman's significance as a poet of democracy. That Burroughs clearly saw the issue is, however, evident from the above and subsequent quotations in this essay.

Accordingly he differed with Higginson as to "the relative value or importance of artificial culture (culture from books, art, society, exclusively) in the production of a national literature, and the broader culture of real life and things." For, like Whitman, Burroughs would replace elegant litterateurs, those fashioners of "intellectual porcelain ware" who "obscure the true ends of literature," with "grand, primary bards upon whom a nation can build."<sup>17</sup> In Burroughs, therefore, one finds a post-war view of American literature at once vigorously national and yet less dependent upon the mood of current nationalistic optimism than that of Higginson.

Corresponding more closely to Higginson in his post-war conception of American literary expression was the artist Eugene Benson, well known in his day as an advocate of nationality in literature.<sup>18</sup> With Higginson he stressed the need of a formative genius to embody all the dominant elements of American life, and he deplored the tendency of American writers to "remain a separate and selfish class."<sup>19</sup> With Higginson he lamented that few of our best literary men were penetrated by the American idea; and with Higginson he saw the American public lacking in the culture needed to call forth a great literature, concluding that American writers were caught between hostile English criticism and barbarous journalism. Both critics on the one hand attacked the snobbery of the *Saturday Review* toward a people's literature, and on the other both perceived that merely the "flapping of the American eagle" would not suffice, that the expression of the American idea must be "modified by the artistic idea." Both insisted that American literature must get in touch with the common people throughout the nation and, freed from the narrow and local, the foreign and heartless, become "something American in its energy and freshness."<sup>20</sup> Like Higginson, Benson attacked both national servility and cultural isolation, and hence he likewise had some misgivings about Whitman. But his plea for a new leader to strike the true ground in American literature recalls in tone the early Emerson rather than the post-war Higginson:

Say we predict a new man because we need a new man in American letters; we predict a new literary force, the growth of the ideas that have agitated us for the last twenty years, that . . . will illustrate the epoch as the epoch of emancipation . . . Man in the free exercise of his faculties, free to choose his happiness, is the grand idea which must be set forth in literature for the people.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Life and Letters of John Burroughs*, I, 137-38.

<sup>18</sup> See *Nation*, II (1868), 7. Benson was also ardent in the movement to emancipate American literature from its concern with the didactic and moralistic; he hoped to train the grasping American mind to receive impressions of the beautiful. See "About the Literary Spirit," *Galaxy*, I (1866), 487 ff.

<sup>19</sup> "Literature and the People," *Galaxy*, III (1867), 871.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 873-74.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 876.

This same note of a new nationalistic literary faith and pride arising out of the Union victory is sounded elsewhere among numerous magazines and essayists throughout the post-war decade. Even Henry Adams expressed the desire for something American, writing in 1867 to Charles Francis, Jr. to send anything in American literature worth noticing, "that owns a voice and not an echo, that talks itself, and not Dante or Tennyson."<sup>22</sup> The revived *Putnam's* was especially solicitous about a national literature. Renewing its promise "to aim at a broad, generous nationality," it saw new literary earnestness, bases, and directions resulting from the Civil War; it prophesied for American literature "a noble and abundant harvest in the future" and promised its readers, though they were "accustomed almost entirely to foreign works of fiction . . . none but stories of native production."<sup>23</sup> Three years later its editor warned that our old dream of a vigorous national literature seemed destined to remain a dream unless we ceased our increasing dependence upon foreign sources for our reading and that "our intellect . . . does not write out of the fulness of the national life. . . ." *Putnam's* courageously applauded the vogue of Nasby, Twain, and Ward because, while not the "loftiest kind" of writers, they were racy, vernacular, and honest.<sup>24</sup> It accorded space for Professor J. M. Hoppin to analyze the cry for "American literature to assume a national character, and to begin for itself a new life expressive of a free spirit of a broader idea of humanity, than the Old World . . . had taught us."<sup>25</sup> Like Higginson in his admission that the old stock of English literature is "flourishing here under brighter suns," Hoppin also admirably reflects the post-war desire for a "true American literature" which should be permeated with the "peculiar simplicity, breadth, and freshness" of the national mind—with "the calm consciousness of strength, the loving spirit of a nation at peace with itself and the world—of a nation that has mastered its deadliest foes, its meanest passions, its wrong, vanity, pride, hate."<sup>26</sup> A representative poet will come, Hoppin concluded, from the west or central territories, "where skies are clearer, nature larger, life freer, more sympathetic, more national . . . far enough inland to be continental, to be cut off from Europe . . . a true product of American soil, American ideas, faith, and aspiration."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Letters of Henry Adams, 1858-1891*, ed. W. C. Ford (Boston and New York, 1930), p. 127.

<sup>23</sup> *Putnam's Magazine*, I (1868), iii, iv, 4, 120-22. Both *Lippincott's* and *Putnam's* were careful during these years to affix such subtitles to their fiction as "an American story" or "an American novel."

<sup>24</sup> *Putnam's Magazine*, V (1870), 609, 721-22.

<sup>25</sup> "The Outlook for our English Literature," *Putnam's Magazine*, V, (1870), 649.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 655.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 655, 656.

In Lippincott's Henry Reeves exulted over the yielding of alien speech before the might of American nationality and unity, and over the emancipation of American literature from foreign tyranny.<sup>28</sup> Similarly the *American Quarterly Church Review*, while taking account of material and cultural obstacles to American literary genius, reasoned that since "Our Republic glows with all the hope of youth" a great national poetry should arise from the inspiration of our history and achievements, our vast territories and varied population, our scenic charms, the nobility of our mission and the largeness of our aspiration.<sup>29</sup> The *International Review*, rejoicing editorially in the establishment of a great political nationalism in America, warned that without a common literature a national union is "external, compelled, unnatural."<sup>30</sup> Therefore our vassalage to monarchical nations in art and literature it characterized as at once "amusing and amazing," endangering "an independent and characteristic American development" in the Republic. With Higginson and Benson it cautioned against the premature education of the critical faculty as inhibitive to original genius, but it shared the widespread faith in the youthful vigor of America for the production of a strongly national literature: "Our nationalism in Art, and Science, and Literature will be as characteristic as our unity in Language, and our Liberty in Government."<sup>31</sup>

Strong before the Civil War in his belief that "the great Idea" should receive expression in a national literature, Whitman found in the Union victory a confirmation of his faith in America and hence the impulse for a renewal and elaboration of his earlier declarations. In poetic additions to *Leaves of Grass* and in impassioned prose he reassured the necessity of singing the peculiar genius of America, now strengthened and expansive:

To sing first . . .  
 The idea of all, of the Western world one and inseparable,  
 And then the song of each member of these States.<sup>32</sup>

In "By Blue Ontario's Shore" additional sections were incorporated to declare that "the great Idea . . . is the mission of poets" and to invoke for America "Bards of the great Idea . . . (for the war, the war is over!)."<sup>33</sup> "Song of the Banner at Daybreak" urges the poet

<sup>28</sup> "Our Provincialisms," *Lippincott's*, II (1869), 310, 320.

<sup>29</sup> "American Poetry," *American Quarterly Church Review*, XXII (1870), 173-74.

<sup>30</sup> "Nationalism and Internationalism," *International Review*, I (1874), 246.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 256-59.

<sup>32</sup> "From Paumanok Starting I Fly Like a Bird" (written 1865, incorporated in 1867 *Leaves of Grass*). See *Leaves of Grass*, ed. Bucke, Harned, and Traubel; *Complete Writings*, III, 197.

<sup>33</sup> "By Blue Ontario's Shore," Sects. 11, 19, 20.

to celebrate the Identity theme; "Turn O Libertad" scorns the chants of "the trailing past," of caste, slavery, and feudalism, for songs of the triumphs of the future. Reading "After All, Not to Create Only" at the American Institute in 1871, Whitman in burlesque vein offered the Muse ("this famous female") American "quarters with all the modern improvements,"<sup>34</sup> ridiculed stale Old World forms and themes, and proclaimed a democratic poetry to be the culmination of that form's evolution.<sup>35</sup> The American literatus will "teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade," all in the name of the "sacred Union."<sup>36</sup> And again, the following year, in the poem delivered at the Dartmouth Commencement, "As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free," Whitman hailed the Union as a Mother worthy of far more than foreign conceits and rhyme, perfumes of foreign courts and indoor library. Here also Whitman suggested that America needs the poetic embodiment not alone of her great physical richness and beauty, but also "subtler refrains" for her "subtler sense." There must be philosophical poems, "mind-formulas," blending fact, thought, man, and God with the idea of the Transcendental Union.<sup>37</sup> Thus did Whitman in the post-war decade increase his emphasis on the idea of the benevolent Union as basic in a national poetry.

His *Democratic Vistas*, however, composed at various times between 1867 and 1871, offers a more coherent series of statements as to what American poetry must be and do in the light of the Union victory and national expansion. As Whitman himself explained in the 1872 Preface to "As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free," he undertook in *Democratic Vistas* to argue or grapple with problems of representing the Ideal Nationality of the future, "of creating in literature an *imaginative* New World, the correspondent and counterpart of the current Scientific and Political New Worlds," and of delivering all Christian lands of the "appallingly extensive nuisance of conventional poetry."<sup>38</sup> The work has its affinity with the attempts, noted above, of contemporaries like Higginson, Benson, and Hoppin to evoke, amid the cynicism and materialism appearing increasingly within the new Union, a poetry which would express the solid substratum of worth and idealism which they all found among the common American people. All such critics, whatever their disagreement over details and form, saw in a great American bard the chief hope of restoring national morality, of infusing heroism and sanity into the national mind and sensitizing the American conscience. It is chiefly this increasing note of the sacerdotal that characterizes the pronouncements on American literature in *Democratic Vistas*:

<sup>34</sup> 1871 version; dropped in 1881.

<sup>35</sup> Sects. 3, 7 (later "Song of the Exposition").

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Sects. 3, 7, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Sects. 1, 2 (later "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood").

<sup>38</sup> *Complete Writings*, V, 188.

. . . I confess that the promulgation and belief in such a class or institution—a new and greater literatus order—its possibility (nay certainty) underlies these entire speculations—and that the rest . . . are all founded upon it. It really seems to me the condition, not only of our future national and democratic development, but of our perpetuation . . . [The] tremendous and dominant play of solely materialistic bearings upon current life in the United States . . . must either be confronted and met by at least an equally subtle and tremendous force-infusion for purposes of spiritualization, for the pure conscience, for genuine esthetics, and for absolute and primal manliness and womanliness—or else our modern civilization, with all its improvements, is in vain, and we are on the road to a destiny, a status equivalent, in its real world, to that of the fabled damned.<sup>39</sup>

Recurrently in *Democratic Vistas* Whitman asserts the need of native authors who shall be "higher in grade than any yet known," who can mould the "whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief. . . ."<sup>40</sup> Supplanting both supercilious triflers and outmoded ecclesiastics is the great American poet: "The priest departs, the divine literatus comes."<sup>41</sup> Yet Whitman does not renounce the more distinctly national, as opposed to generally humanitarian, elements in American literature. Admitting the existence of common features in all good literature, he contends also that the utterance of a profound something subtly interwoven with a nation's personality and materiality "is the work, or the main part of the work, of any country's true author."<sup>42</sup> Hence the third stage of American history, arising out of earlier periods of republican foundation and material expansion, must have a "native expression-spirit" through its authors "by a sublime and serious Religious Democracy sternly taking command, dissolving the old, sloughing off surfaces, and from its own interior and vital principles, reconstructing, democratizing society."<sup>43</sup>

Elsewhere in the *Vistas* Whitman restates substantially the desiderata which he had submitted by 1860 in early editions and Prefaces of *Leaves of Grass*. Yet he vigorously underlines or elaborates some of his former pronouncements, and to note these briefly is to discover Whitman's changing conception of the great American literatus: The American poet sees Science and Democracy as the culminating expressions of God, Whitman emphasizes anew.<sup>44</sup> He

<sup>39</sup> *Complete Writings*, V, 146-47. The same note occurs in the 1872 Preface: "There can be no poetry worthy the name without that element [Religion] behind all. . . . It must enter into the poems of the nation. It must make the nation." *Complete Writings*, V, 190, 191.

<sup>40</sup> *Complete Writings*, V, 53, 54.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 54, 56, 57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 126-27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 124, 125.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 52-54, 92, 119-21, 128. Cf. also 1872 Preface, *ibid.*, V, 190, 191.

must express the whole of America before its parts, reconciling conflicting interiors in the light of the "tremendous IDEA."<sup>45</sup> His chief traits will be cheerful simplicity, a strong fibred joyousness and faith, moral conscientiousness, an absence of doubt, *ennui*, persiflage, and Puritan outlooks.<sup>46</sup> He will restore Nature as the "pervading atmosphere" to poems, and the test of all high literary and aesthetic combinations, including the "towering super-addition, the moral and spiritual consciences" of man, which stand above "objective Nature."<sup>47</sup> And finally, America must find a bard to make poems of death and "so link and tally the rational physical being of man, with the ensembles of time and space."<sup>48</sup> Such was the deepening insistence in *Democratic Vistas* on the prophetic and religious character of the American poet and on his "New World Metaphysics." Already evident in Whitman's sober earnestness is his growing realization, after more than two decades of effort in behalf of an autochthonous literature, not only of the literary obstacles surrounding its creation but also of the perils confronting American democracy itself.

Unanimity by no means existed, however, among those who thoughtfully concerned themselves with the question of a national literature in the years after Appomattox. Halleck in 1867, referring to the works of Cozzens and Verplanck as excellent "American specimens of English literature" and proof that the "waters of the 'well of English undefiled'" can be drunk here in all their purity, although the bottles in which they are imported were stolen, was emphatic in his refusal to use the term "*American literature*," because he had "never been able to define what *American Literature* means."<sup>49</sup> And many another ardently patriotic nationalist failed to find a national literature, in Whitman's sense of the term, a corollary of his Americanism. Thus Lowell, despite gestures towards an original literature in the Introduction to the Second Series of *The Biglow Papers*, soon left no doubts that his opinion concerning nationality in literature had reverted to what it was in the forties.<sup>50</sup> Con-

<sup>45</sup> *Complete Writings*, V, 58-60, 90. Cf also *Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, ed. Holloway (New York, 1932), II, 54, 57-58: Whitman objected in 1874 in the *Christmas Graphic* not only to imported works whose characters "compared with our earthly democracy are all up in the clouds," but as equally insulting to the genius of These States the "ruffians, rum-drinkers, and trulls" of recent California literature.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 132. Cf. Higginson, above.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 135, 138.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 141.

<sup>49</sup> J. Q. Wilson, ed., *Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck* (New York, 1869), pp. 262-63; and N. F. Adkins, *Fitz-Greene Halleck* (New Haven, 1930), p. 363.

<sup>50</sup> See above, and B. T. Spencer, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-151.

vinced that American literature needed the discipline of older cultures as "a prophylactic against democracy misunderstood," he wrote to Howells in November, 1865, that the "danger of our literature . . . is carelessness and want of scholarly refinement. That is the rock on which we may go to pieces."<sup>51</sup> Soon afterward, however, he suggested that the lack of a distinctive national character and conscious nationality among the American people precluded the penning of "a national satire, because there is no butt visible to all parts of the country at once."<sup>52</sup> Yet most positive was his denunciation, in his essay on *Percival* in 1867, of the British critics' expectation of a virile American poetry arising in the West, as a "cheap vision"; and he ridiculed such a "shaggy Pegasus" as "half horse, half alligator." More significantly he took issue with the Whitman-Higginson school of literary nationalism through a critical separation of the areas of politics and aesthetics. "Life in its large sense, and not as it is temporarily modified by manners or politics," he wrote, "is the only subject of the poet."<sup>53</sup> His reply to Whitman's plea for a democratic poetry was that Democracy is too abstract to give a flavor to literature and that America would produce a great imaginative poet in spite of, not because of, its presence. Democracy can be reflected only subtly and indirectly, its real literary effect being an Emersonian emancipation from the past rather than the "sham-shaggy" and unrepresentative productions of a Whitman. Literary trends he described as being toward a vast commonwealth, not provincial nationality; therefore, "We should expect of the young Western poet that he would aim rather at elegance and refinement than at the display of the rude vigor that is supposed to be his birthright."<sup>54</sup> Like Lowell, Edward Everett Hale found himself unable to advocate "American poetry, quoad American." Writing in 1871 to the historian W. B. Weeden, Hale declared that American literature must take its chance along with American sermons, art, and manufactures; that it should not be coddled; that "a school of American geometry were as desirable as one of American poetry."<sup>55</sup>

In the post-war decade, the most concerted opposition to American literature apparently was conducted by the newly established *Nation*, whose "habitual tone of condescending depreciation in treating imaginative literature of indigenous origin" was matter for

<sup>51</sup> *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. C. E. Norton (New York, 1894), I, 351.

<sup>52</sup> *Literary Essays* (Boston, 1890), II, 278.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 150-52. Cf. also III, 307-08.

<sup>55</sup> E. E. Hale, *Life and Letters*, ed. E. E. Hale, Jr. (Boston, 1917), II, 115. For Weeden's defense of American literary idealism, see below.

Edward Eggleston's reproof even at the end of the century.<sup>56</sup> Early in 1866 it declared editorially, in reply to the criticism that the *Nation* neglected American authors, that the best talent of America was turned in other directions, that the reading matter of the country was therefore almost entirely foreign, and that at best the current period in American letters could be called only preparatory. Like Lowell, the *Nation* explicitly denounced the premise on which Whitman based his call for a national literature: "We protest against the shallow notion that a peculiar standard of art or literary criticism has been evolved by our political and social system. This is one of those bits of Anglo-Saxon conceit which gives Frenchmen and Germans so much amusement."<sup>57</sup> Since truth and beauty are of no country, the *Nation* argued with Hale, there can be no national literature any more than there can be national science. Accordingly it assured Richard Grant White that he would live to see the day "not when, as some wiseacres expect, America will have a new and peculiar literature of its own, and even an astronomy and pure mathematics of its own, but when it will contribute its share to the literary and scientific stock of the civilized world."<sup>58</sup> Contemptuous of the school of "Native American, or Know-Nothing poets," the *Nation* ridiculed its adherents for subscribing to the belief that mammoth caves, buffaloes, the American elm, or the bald-headed eagle would make a new art of poetry in which thought, harmonious verse, and imagination would be absent.<sup>59</sup>

Climaxing these sporadic criticisms of nationality in literature with a comprehensive attack in 1868, the *Nation* sought to rout most species of "Native American" litterateurs by separating their forces and showing the incompatibility and confusion of their demands. Besides the A. B. Street group—whom it accused of identifying American literature with an employment of Washington, Lafayette, the red-man, and the buffalo—it noted and characterized the remaining coteries of literary nationalists: those who believed that Columbus' discovery of America necessitated a new kind of literature; those who found Americanism only in the daily journalism of the uncultured and who distrusted a polished style as foreign; those who in the spirit of uncorrected brag judged the Americanism of a work by its hostility to anything foreign; and finally, those exponents of the democratic humanitarianism of Walt Whitman, which the *Nation* considered honest and not altogether foolish, though it felt Whitman himself, judged by "ordinary standards," to be inde-

<sup>56</sup> *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (New York, 1899), p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> "Our Literature and Our Critics," *Nation*, II (1866), 267.

<sup>58</sup> *Nation*, III (1866), 394.

<sup>59</sup> "More Versifying," *Nation*, IV (1867), 46.

cent, unartistic, and lacking in brains. Joining with Whitman, however, in the hope for an age lacking in feudal oppression and in the belief that this hope might sometime be realized in America, the socially liberal *Nation* agreed that a literature reflecting this condition may "with no great impropriety be styled distinctively an American literature." But it added that we must wait for the poet of democracy and that meanwhile whatever America is thinking is sure to get itself expressed. It concluded that "just so far as America is American, the literature of America will be American," and those who wish more are unwise and doomed to disappointment.<sup>60</sup>

By the same logic the *Nation* later argued that the great American Poem was impossible because America had not lived a great poem; it could not be written "until democracy, the idea of our day and nation and race, has agonized . . . through centuries, and made its work secure."<sup>61</sup> It thus conceived of a national poetry as expressive of only what has come to be rather than, like Whitman, as creating an "imaginative New World" and therefore prophetic of what shall be. Though despairing of a great national poem, the *Nation* found the relation of fiction to the nation's life less complex and more immediate than that of poetry and hence the creation of the Great American Novel more readily possible. Yet no American novel, except possibly *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, it declared, had painted "American life so broadly, truly, and sympathetically that every American of feeling and culture is forced to acknowledge the picture as a likeness of something which he knows."<sup>62</sup> With national unity in taste and manners still absent, with America's character as a nation not sufficiently formed and constantly changing, with the portrayal of one section not recognized by another as American society, the *Nation* concluded that even for the Great American Novel America needs more time and talent.<sup>63</sup> Thus in its early years the *Nation* provided a series of most incisive and consistent evaluations of the issues in the current controversy over an American literature, admirably justifying its promise to provide judicious rather than flattering literary criticism.<sup>64</sup> Though it accepted the expression of the democratic idea as most requisite to Americanism in literature, its failure to share the confidence of Whitman and

<sup>60</sup> "Literature Truly American," *Nation*, VI (1868), 7-8.

<sup>61</sup> "The Great American Novel," *Nation*, VI (1868), 27.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. The nineteenth-century expectation of the Great American Novel, frequently referred to in the present article in its relationship to the larger demand for a national literature, is surveyed by H. R. Brown, "The Great American Novel," *American Literature*, VII (1935), 1-14.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>64</sup> See F. L. Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, III, 333.

Higginson in a forthcoming national literature reflecting a triumphant democratic idealism may be attributed to its more soberly realistic sense that many problems of human liberty and justice had been scarcely affected, let alone solved, by the Union victory.

Although a number of the *Nation's* journalistic contemporaries were editorially in sympathy with its position on a national literature, their treatments were generally less cogent and appeared less frequently. The attitude of *Harper's New Monthly* was evidenced in 1868 when it commended the movement for a National Institute on the grounds that "Nobody supposes that it is to be the egg from which that much prophesied and long-delayed 'American Literature' is suddenly to emerge."<sup>65</sup> In the same year *Lippincott's* published Dr. Henry Hartshorne's argument that the cry for a purely American national literature is rational only in its emphasis that greatness cannot come through mere imitation. Renouncing "mere eccentricity" and "slavish copying of models" as equally futile, Hartshorne proposed a criterion for Americanism in literature in arguing that America is uniquely related to "Christian culture."<sup>66</sup> A well-known surgeon-author the following year in *Appletons'*, however, denied to America any sort of national culture and hence concluded that no truly national literature was possible: "the American soil is not rich enough to grow a luxuriant plant of great poetry." Not through deliberate and organized literary movements but only after a long process of cultured enrichment after material triumphs will the great American poet be born.<sup>67</sup>

Somewhat differing from those who in the post-war decade were dubious of the existence of an American literature, however, were those orthodox critics who admitted the presence of indigenous and original American works but who, instead of welcoming them, condemned them in the name of traditional belletristic standards. The crude novelty and wide popularity of the Western humorists, journalists, and poets in the late sixties and early seventies had already in some quarters been taken as proof that a truly American literature of, for, and by the people had emerged. It was these works especially which were attacked in the established journals on the grounds of both style and ethical implication. They were indicted as an affront both to prevailing American morality and to taste.

The presence of this conservative critical attitude in the South after the war is seen in an attack in the *Southern Review* (appar-

<sup>65</sup> "Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly*, XXXVII (1868), 423. Curtis conducted the department at this time.

<sup>66</sup> "American Culture," *Lippincott's*, I (1868), 646-47.

<sup>67</sup> T. M. Coan, "About Poetry in America," *Appletons' Journal*, II (1869), 151. Cf. also *Appletons' Journal*, IV (1870), 142, and XIV (1875), 468.

ently by its vigorous editor, A. T. Bledsoe), which charged that American literature was clique-ridden and the national taste was corrupt and vitiated by braggadocio. Deploring the popularity of Billings and Twain and yet believing that America would have a literature and culture of its own expressing its unique national existence, the editor urged a cultivated class and an organic growth out of a British and Continental literary past in place of an arrogant Americanism in speech and literature.<sup>68</sup> A similar plea that America not renounce her cultural heritage was made more cogently the following year in the *North American* by the fastidious classicist, Charles Astor Bristed, who attacked the "vague notion that American literature must have some purely American flavor about it. . . . There was just enough truth about this fancy to make it a perilous delusion."<sup>69</sup> Condemning mere imitativeness, Bristed nevertheless asserted that "Equally misleading was the supposition that grandeur of national objects must and ought to be a source of inspiration," and that "Fully as erroneous was the analogous assumption that great national actions must call forth great poetry in their own day." Joining in the general concern of conservative critics over the growing acceptance of literary extravagance, Bristed admonished Americans against the "seductive fantasy of a republican road to literary eminence."<sup>70</sup>

The publication of J. S. Hart's inclusive *A Manual of American Literature* the same year stirred the *National Quarterly Review* to a caustic onslaught against "illiterate scribblers," Western newspapers and universities, and an "original" literature for the masses.<sup>71</sup> American literature, the *Quarterly* insisted, can be peculiar in neither dialect nor ideas; it is simply good literature written by Americans. To hunt for unique American literature is only to run into the scum of English literature.<sup>72</sup> And again in this year the growing tendency to identify the unpolished productions of the Western authors with an original and genuine American literature drew the reproof of the historian William B. Weeden, who blamed not only the frontier newspapers and slang editors but also the encouragement of English critics for "the strange creature which the world chooses to call falsely 'American.'"<sup>73</sup> In Whitman and the Western writers he found a mixture of slime and poetry; the glorification of

<sup>68</sup> "Americanisms," *Southern Review*, IX (1871), 531, 535, 550, 558.

<sup>69</sup> "American Criticism; its Difficulties and Prospects," *North American Review*, CXIV (1872), 27.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> "The Puffing Element in American Literature," *National Quarterly Review*, XXVI (1872), 42-49. Presumably the article is from the pen of the editor, Edward I. Sears.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>73</sup> "American Poetry," *Old and New*, V (1872), 474.

the simple and primitive in the poetry of Hay and Miller he characterized as immoral, uncivilized, and untrue: "The only thing American in this development of Western culture, is the frank vanity in which the whole story is written. That is the feature which we own as national."<sup>74</sup> Unlike Whitman, Weeden considered the American point of view largely derivative and eclectic, and hence American poets might well be nourished on the classics. Yet he reflects the impact of the Union victory on the movement toward a national literature in asserting that Lincoln and other statesmen had already acted great American poems: "When the favored child of art comes who shall, with seeing eye, read these lives of the American heroes, he will give us the true poetry of the New World."<sup>75</sup> Richard Watson Gilder, as associate editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, aligned that magazine with the guardians of good taste by accusing the English critics and others who demanded a peculiar American literature utilizing Western materials, of showing ignorance of both poetic principles and American life. The only relevant questions for American writers to consider concerning their work are: is it beautiful; is it worthy?<sup>76</sup> In similar vein Richard Grant White had earlier charged those who demanded a unique national literature with an imperfect knowledge of the sources and development of all literature and with a desire for an impossible absurdity.<sup>77</sup>

Such was the general trend of the controversy over a national literature in the decade following the Civil War. The lines of the conflict were not drawn with uniform sharpness and clarity, but with innumerable gradations of critical opinion. Certainly few among the contending spokesmen would have committed themselves unconditionally against it. No doubt the majority, given first the opportunity of defining an American literature, would have claimed to be its advocates. The crux of the problem, therefore, does not lie in the mere opposition to, or approval of a national literature, but in the divergency of conceptions which arose in the course of the long controversy. It arose from the two discernible poles of critical opinion, the fundamental opposition of which called the controversy into being: one which assumed that with a minimum of traditional culture America could produce at once a genuine and worthy literature radically new in theme and style; another which assumed that by long cultivation of literary taste America would gradually be able to subject its materials to belletristic treatment and attain those

<sup>74</sup> "American Poetry," *Old and New*, X (1872), 476.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480. Contrast Bristed, above.

<sup>76</sup> "The Old Cabinet," *Scribner's Monthly*, X (1875), 112-14.

<sup>77</sup> *Galaxy*, II (1866), 542.

universals in form and idea which are the hallmark of all true literature. Few critics represented either theory completely with all its implications; most tended toward one, all the while feeling the pull of the other.<sup>78</sup>

*Ohio Wesleyan University*

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<sup>78</sup> Consideration of a few authors such as Stedman, Taylor, James, Howells, Eggleston, and Harte, who gave occasional but preliminary expression to their views on American literature before 1875, I have withheld for a subsequent essay, inasmuch as their attitudes were constant, were not essentially new, and the weight of their influence was felt in the last quarter of the century rather than in the Civil War period and the decade following.

## REVIEWS

*Der Arme Heinrich. A Poem by Hartman von Ouwe.* By J. KNIGHT BOSTOCK (*German Mediaeval Series*. Professor H. G. FIEDLER, General Editor, Section A, Vol. I). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1941. Pp. 114. 6s.

The publication reviewed hereby is a pedagogical masterpiece and should not fail to further the study both of Middle High German in general and Hartmann von Aue in particular. It is intended for students who have a good knowledge of modern German, but are yet beginners in Middle High German. The text of the poem is provided with detailed explanations given in footnotes and in a carefully-worked-out vocabulary (with valuable references to standard works). Special attention, in the form of a supplementary note of two pages, is given to the use of the negative. The text proper is preceded by a select bibliography of forty-four numbers (including only the most important works relevant to the study of *AH*) and an introduction of twenty pages devoted to a discussion of Hartmann's life, works and home, his language and style, and the various problems connected with *AH*, such as: (a) the moral purpose of the poem, (b) the source of the story, (c) the manuscripts, (d) the meter. The text itself is a reprint of Erich Gierach's reconstruction (first published, 1913; second edition, 1925).

The biographical notes are mostly based on H. Sparnaay, *Hartmann von Aue. Studien zu einer Biographie* (2 vols., 1933-39). No mention is made of Sievers' study "Zur inneren und äußeren Chronologie der Werke Hartmanns von Aue" in *Hermaea*, XXXI (1932), 53-66, nor to my *Introduction to Middle High German* (New York, 1937), where some of Hartmann's poems are reproduced (pp. 259-265). Bostock has my wholehearted support in his refutation of Pater Alban Stöckl's attempt to ascribe to Hartmann the *Passional* and the *Väterbuch*. I agree with the editor also in his assumption that Hartmann's longer works were written in the order: *Büchlein I*, *Erec*, *Gregorius*, *Der arme Heinrich*, *Iwein*. I have a remark to make concerning the *Witwenklage* (p. 6) which is included in my *Introduction* (pp. 264-5). No doubt as to Hartmann's authorship of this poem is expressed by Bostock although it had been justly questioned by Eduard Sievers in the above-mentioned article. Cf. also A. Leitzmann in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, LIX (1935), 166 ff. The poem in which Saladin is mentioned (cf. p. 7) is also contained in my *Introduction* (pp. 262-264) with a different interpretation of several passages. The statement made on p. 18 that the MS texts of the Latin legend are later than Hartmann's poem is not to be taken in the sense that the legend itself is of later origin. On the contrary, J.

Klapper, *Die Legende vom Armen Heinrich* (1914) has shown convincingly (p. 15) that the Latin legend existed as early as the twelfth century and (p. 20) that it was used in church as a sermon topic on the third Sunday after Epiphany, in connection with the Gospel of that day (Matthew 8:1-13). On p. 32 J. Klapper has this to say: "Daß dieser lateinische Text nicht aus Hartmanns Gedicht geflossen sein kann, hat die Motivvergleichung ergeben. Hartmann hat umgekehrt einen entsprechenden lateinischen Text, der bereits den stark moralisch-theologischen Einschlag hatte, als Quelle benützt."

The chapter dealing with the meter keeps within traditional lines based on the assumption that the MHG word accent was identical with the modern German accent. Unfortunately my extensive studies in this field have not yet been published, mostly because they are not yet completely finished and in certain ramifications perhaps not yet conclusive enough to be presented. Only concerning the prefix *un-* a brief statement was included in my *Introduction* (§43 c). The prefix *un-* is unaccented if the following syllable is accented in the non-compound form, e.g., *un-réht*, *un-maére*, *un-dánc*, *un-gérne*, *un-mázén*, *un-tríúwe*, etc. It is accented if the next syllable has no stress of its own, e.g., *ún-verdaget*, *ún-gefí'ege*, *ún-geliú'cke*, *ún-genésen*, etc. Consequently, I read the following verses (specifically pointed out by Bostock on pp. 21-24) differently:

147 *ér was trárec únd unfró*

556 *do wás ir wille ín unkúnt.*

V. Michels, in his essay "Zur deutschen Akzentgeschichte" in *Germanica, Sievers-Festschrift* (Halle, 1925), p. 45, remarks that already Lachmann (*Kl. Schr.* I, 375) had found such OHG accentuations as *undráte*, *unhréini*, *unwírdig* in Otfrid's language and that such accentuations as *unsáilic*, *unschúldec* are quite common in MHG poetry. Wilmanns-Michels, *Walther von der Vogelweide I: Leben und Dichten Walthers von der Vogelweide* (second edition, Halle, 1916) define the usage in Walther's poetry correctly, stating that the prefix *un-* is unaccented if the following syllable is accented in non-compound form, but accented if the next syllable has no stress of its own. However, Michels seems to regard this usage as a kind of poetic license or irregularity. My own observations forced me to the conclusion that this must have been the regular accentuation in MHG. Therefore, I have incorporated this rule into my above-mentioned *Introduction* (§43 c and vocabulary). The words *unfúoge* "scandalous behavior" (*Nib.* 870, 4) and *unniúot* "ill-humor, cross mood" (*Nib.* 447, 2. 878, 4; *Kudrun* 76, 2) have a secondary accent on the prefix.

A study of the words prefixed with *un-* occurring in Wolfram's *Parzival* undertaken in 1937 by Mr. Christopher Huntington, then a member of my Philological Seminar, illustrated the complexity of the problem, but at the same time seemed to support my contention. Out of a total of 266 words in which *un-* is prefixed to a form

already provided with an unaccented verbal prefix, *un-* is accented 254 times, unaccented in ten instances where it stands in the ana-crusis (*unrefúlt* 804, 29; *ungelich* 44, 30; *ungleich* 367, 15; *ungefü-ege* 247, 6; *unvergölt* 53, 2; *unversniten* 347, 27; *unversünnen* 287, 9; *unverzáglt* 787, 25; *unverzágten* 735, 1; *unverzágétlich* 704, 12), and unaccented in two instances where the original prefix *ge-* has lost its vowel: *ungáz* 485, 29 (variant: *úngaz*); *ungéndet* 617, 28. Furthermore, Mr. Huntington registered 197 words in which the particle *un-* was added to the non-prefixed simple word. Out of this total 143 followed my rule, i.e., were accented on the stem; two could be read only with the main stress on the particle *un-*; four needed two accents; in 48 instances Mr. Huntington remained undecided what accent to use. But in the majority of the undecided cases it seemed as if the word needed two beats, one on the particle *un-* and the other on the stem. Mr. Huntington based his study on Lachmann's text, giving in an appendix the variants represented by the manuscripts. A comparison of the variants reveals a rather arbitrary kind of text criticism as employed by Lachmann. One illustration: *úngern*, occurring six times in manuscript *D* (161, 8; 216, 28; 286, 20; 323, 29; 695, 28; 734, 21), appears regularly as *ungerne* in Lachmann's text. On the other hand, *ungérne* of manuscript *G* (184, 5; 605, 1) appears once as *úngern* and the other time as *ungérn*. This experience shows how imperative it is for further investigations of our type to rely only on an original manuscript and not on a critical edition, and that we should have in this country photostatic reproductions of all the important medieval manuscripts.

I differ from Bostock also in the reading of the following verses (among others):

- |      |                                     |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| 7    | <i>án mislichen búochen</i>         |
| 941  | <i>diz waer dér lantliúte spót</i>  |
| 557  | <i>sús antwúrte ín diu máget</i>    |
| 1068 | <i>diu máget antwúrte im alsó</i>   |
| 298  | <i>índ ein wól werbéndez wíp</i>    |
| 9    | <i>ób er iht des fúnde</i>          |
| 456  | <i>dés muoz ich schántliche nót</i> |
- (ich in contrast to *ír* of 454).

This is not the place to expound my views on MHG accentuation. May it suffice merely to hint at some strong possibilities deserving closer attention and investigation. Literary MHG was under powerful Latin influence which went as far as to cause a shift of accent in the inflection: *míslich*, *mislichen*, *mislicher*, *mislichez*. The accentuation of the present participle seems to have been regulated by the rules of the Latin grammar. The pronunciation *lebén-dig* is apparently due to this factor. (Cf. my note "Deutsch *lebén-dig*" in the *Germanic Review*, X (1935), 49-51.) In nominal compounds very often (always?) the main stress rests on the second component.

Remnants of this earlier order can be found in numerous Swiss and German place names, e.g., *Aarberg*, *Aarwangen*, *Appenzell*, *Eggersriet*, *Graubü'nden*, *Schaffhausen*, *Sachsenhausen*, *Heilbronn*, *Paderbörn*, *Bremerháven*, *Saarbrü'cken*, etc.

As a result of my different reading I am far less bothered with "Beschwerte Hebung." I recognize "Beschwerte Hebung" only in cases where the two accented syllables belong to the same word. If the two stressed syllables belong to two different words, the caesura takes the place of the "Senkung."

Bostock's vocabulary is distinguished by unusual carefulness of definition and should therefore be inducive to further word studies. How an advancement in this field can still be achieved may be exemplified by the word *tugent* which Bostock defines as "knighthly qualities," "excellence." There is a tendency to divest MHG words, whose cognates in modern German are part of the Christian religious or moral terminology, of that special meaning. It is of course true that very frequently the same words have quite different meanings in the two periods. However, it should not be forgotten that the German moral and religious terminology has its roots in MHG. Thus, the moral sense of *tugent* was already in existence in the Middle Ages. Hartmann lived and wrote at a time when the Church was the dominating influence with great effect upon the language and literature. Secular and religious life was one. The fundamental character of the armored knight who rode forth to fight for God, king, country, and right was Christian. Frances Polson, a former student of mine and a member of my Philological Seminar at the University of Wisconsin in 1938, made a special study of the meaning of *tugent* as used by Hartmann von Aue. Her conclusions were that it had two connotations: The one had to do with virtue based upon Christian morality, and the other with social accomplishments in medieval society. One point brought out in Miss Polson's investigation seems to me especially significant. I quote from her unpublished paper:

The meaning of *tugent* as used in *Iwein* 340, 2090, 6466, 6496, and *Erec* 1623, 5900, can be well applied in Hartmann's descriptions of feminine characters. Since woman was a refining influence in medieval literature, it is to be expected that she was a virtuous character, and so it is assumed by Hartmann. To express this concept he employs the word *tugent*. . . . In Benecke and Lachmann's edition of *Iwein* there is a note which defines this use of *tugent* as "das feinere Gefühl, aus welchem wohlwollende Teilnahme und Äußerung derselben hervorgeht." This definition is quite true as far as it goes, but Hartmann's use of *tugent* expresses much more than just sympathy or commiseration. . . . *küsche tugent* expresses all the womanly virtues which could be attributed to the noble lady of the Middle Ages, chastity, purity, and modesty. The virtuous qualities of the feminine characters are expressed in the word *tugent* and its meaning here is based upon Christian morality. . . . In other lines its use in the sentence seems to have a somewhat different implication than that which is exemplified here. Upon occasion Hartmann employs the word in describing more worldly virtues rather than the moral and ethical virtues which are based upon Christianity.

Miss Polson found an obvious occurrence of the second meaning, which she defined as "the eagerness or willingness to act nobly,"

in *Iwein* 4089, *diu tugent und diu manheit*, "the nobleness of character to wish to do as well as the courage and strength to do."

In entering here upon a brief discussion of these problems, I did not intend to minimize the value of Mr. Bostock's excellent work which is primarily of a pedagogical nature, as clearly shown by the fact that Gierach's text is accepted without any change. As a textbook for beginners in the study of Middle High German and German philology (history of the German language) it should be welcome to all Germanic scholars in the English-speaking world. The publisher, Basil Blackwell, deserves a word of appreciation for the attractive printing of the book in such difficult times.

ALFRED SENN

*University of Pennsylvania.*

*A Middle High German Benedictine Rule, MS Wilhering, Austria, No. 14.* By EVA BOETTCHER LANGE. Latrobe, Pennsylvania: The Archabbey Press, 1942. Pp. 166.

This is a Columbia University Dissertation, published with the expressed purpose (p. 1) of providing "additional prose material for the study of Middle High German, in accordance with the procedure initiated by Professor Wilhelm at the University of Freiburg . . ." The author further says: "It is hoped that in its present form the work may contribute directly to a grammar of Middle High German which is yet to be written on the basis of non-standardized prose texts from that period."

A description of the manuscript, Wilhering, No. 14, occupies thirteen pages. The phonology of the text, called the "sound system," occupies fifty-two pages, plus seven in which conclusions as to the dialect of the text are drawn. There follows a short excursion of six pages devoted to the "Vocabulary and Style" of the text. The bibliography occupies three and one-half pages. The text with its apparatus requires seventy-one pages. A single page of reduced facsimile is given. Since, in her description of the MS, the author fails to say how large the original pages are, one cannot say how great this reduction is, but it is apparently considerable.

Your reviewer is less enthusiastic about the prospective new MHG grammar "yet to be written on the basis of non-standardized prose texts from that period" than he used to be. What may emerge, perhaps, is a series of dialect grammars, if that seems ultimately to be worth while. On the other hand, there is no doubt that an additional prose text constitutes a useful increment to our fund of materials for linguistic studies in this period, notably for studies as to vocabulary and usage. Likewise, of course, there is no excuse for "standardizing" such a text as the Wilhering Benedictine Rule.

There are very good reasons for "standardizing" literary texts of importance. Ultimately, however, no serious linguistic student of our day can content himself with printed versions of medieval prose texts in which he is interested. The only lastingly useful kind of an edition for linguistic purposes is the sort of thing G. A. Hench did in 1893 for the OHG *Isidor* [QF. 72].

It would be easy, and I think unfair to the author of this dissertation, to find major difficulties with much of her treatment of the phonological problems involved. She is unable to use English adequately for her purposes and she should have been helped over her difficulties in this respect or permitted to write her dissertation in German. What she has done, in principle, is to assemble examples from her text for each of the items (she calls them "letters" pp. 23, 54) in the phonological repertoire. There is no assurance that she has assembled all available examples in each case. She then quotes in her own English translations from various "authorities" (Weinhold, *Bairische Grammatik*, Paul, *Mhd. Gram.*, Mausser, *Mhd. Gram.*, Michels, *Elementarbuch*, and, occasionally, Moser, *Frühnhd. Gram.*) those sentences which seem to her to find support or require denial on the basis of the material of her text. She uses the 1929 edition of Paul (instead of the 13th ed., 1939), cites from a 1910 edition of Kluge's *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, and from the 1911 edition (5th in 1936) of Braune's *Ahd. Gram.* She discusses the entire problem of the sounds of her text without a single reference to the work of Zwierzina, *ZtsfdA.*, 44 and 45.

The author was clearly willing to devote herself with assiduity and zeal to the task before her and it is unfortunate that no one prevented her from making blunders such as that of speaking of the "Suffix zu" in *zuegemessen* (p. 33), or of "letters" (pp. 23, 54) when she should have been thinking of sounds, or of the "lengthening of *ü* to a diphthong" (p. 36), or of "guttural" consonants (p. 47), or of *geschen* as a case in which "h is eliminated after a long vowel" (p. 75). She quite misapprehends Schatz (*Bair. Gram.*, §50) when she says: "Diphthongization of long i in unaccented syllables took place . . ." (p. 40). She mistranslates Mausser's *Hauchlaut* by "aspirate" and speaks of a "time when h had probably become an aspirate in MHG" (p. 77). I do not know what sort of misconception lies behind her sentence (p. 64): "In the sound-shift from OHG to MHG, the Bavarian dialect resisted . . ." I repeat, it is a pity she was not helped over these difficulties, for without them the work she has done might have been considerably more useful and certainly more likely to inspire confidence in her conclusions. It is also most probable that, had her mentors read this dissertation as closely as I have read it, she would have been required to remedy other deficiencies as well, none of which is of itself quite heinous, but all of which together detract considerably from the value of the work done. I mean, for example, such things as this: On page 48 the author says: "In NHG the j has disappeared between two vowels,

but forms without *j* were already found in the MHG period. Of this intervocalic *j* no trace is seen in the MS." That is fine, as far as it goes, but what one really has to know here is how much evidence there is to show that an intervocalic *j* has disappeared from forms of this text.

By way of reassuring myself as to the principles of editing involved I looked again at Eduard Sievers' edition of the *Oxford Benediktinerregel* (Halle, 1887) and compared it with Selmer's (Cambridge, Mass., 1933). A good deal has been said here and there which might lead the uninitiated to believe that all editing prior to that of Professor Wilhelm and his students was misleading or even futile from the linguist's point of view, whereas, as a matter of fact, one can come as close to an understanding of the actual language of the MS from Sievers' as from Selmer's text. If a text is designed to be read it should really be edited, in the sense in which Sievers understood that word. If it is to be used as material for linguistic study, the ultimately essential form is the photographic facsimile, for which any kind of typography is at best a poor substitute. In the present case: if this dissertation has done what it purports to do by way of phonological analysis, no one will need again to consider the multifarious graphic aberrations from the norms of this MS, and the text might as well have been corrected at least to a reasonable readability. Among other things, the effort spent in devising and printing two egregious symbols for *r* might well have been spared. If this job has not been adequately done, the next person to undertake the task will certainly require the MS, or a photograph of it, in spite of this typographical version.

Probably no one will be disposed to dispute the conclusion reached by Mrs. Lange, that this MS, from Wilhering near Linz, is written in a Middle Bavarian dialect, or that there are some characteristics of Southern Bavarian in the text. What she says about Middle German traits is something less than clear and may need re-scrutiny, though her ultimate conclusion that there is no MG influence in this text, may well enough be correct.

R-M. S. HEFFNER

*University of Wisconsin*

*The Phonology of Jacob Ayrer's Language, Based on his Rhymes.*

By WILLIAM A. KOZUMPLIK. Dissertation, the University of Chicago, 1942. Pp. xv + 186.

Seit Bahder in den *Grundlagen des nhd. Lautsystems* (Straßburg 1890), 33 f. über die Sprache Ayrers das Urteil abgab, sie decke sich fast völlig mit der des Hans Sachs, ja gestatte sich die gleichen Freiheiten im Reim, galt es als ausgemacht, daß der Nürn-

berger Schriftdialekt des Meistersingers für den 50 Jahre jüngeren Erben verbindlich ist. Diese kanonische Schulmeinung wirkt noch 1929 in K. Hofers Buch *Die Bildung Jacob Ayrers* fort, wo es S. 74 heißt: "Ayrer hat keine Sprache." Wie angenehm, über diese Sprache, die keine ist, Näheres zu vernehmen.

Der Wert der unter Professor Bayerschmidts Leitung in Chicago gearbeiteten Dissertation liegt in der erschöpfenden Fülle von Einzelbeobachtungen und minutiosen Details, durch die jene negative Wendung von der "keinen Sprache" Ayrers ihre positive Seite erhält. Wir sehen in vielen Einzelheiten—wie in Schauerhammers Untersuchung zu Kaspar Scheit, die in K.s Bibliographie vergessen ist—die mundartlichen Bestandteile einer Schriftsprache, die für die Geschichte des Neuhochdeutschen wichtig geworden ist. Es ist das gleiche "Kochrezept" bei Sachs wie bei Ayrer, das ist wahr, aber daß und wie das Nürnberger Literatur-Messingisch sich zwischen 1550 und 1600 verändert, ergibt sich aus K.s ausgezeichneten Angaben. Ich stimme Methoden und Ergebnissen ohne Einschränkung zu, hätte nur unter den zum Vergleich herangezogenen Nürnbergern des 15. Jh. z.B. gern Erhart Groß gesehen, nach 1430 in Blüte, der seine für den Lokalbedarf bestimmten Bücher mit eigner Hand schrieb, was grade hier von Wert ist. Die von Ph. Strauch edierte *Griseldis*—Eichler hat 1935 ihre Sprache behandelt—wäre ergiebiger gewesen als *Muskatblüt*.

Was nun die Ergebnisse angeht, so werden bei Ayrer Vokale aller Quantitäten, *ei* verschiedener Herkunft, altes und neues *au*, *u*: *uo* gebunden, ohne daß dafür die Nürnberger Mundart verantwortlich zu machen wäre. Die Basis dieser im Nürnberger Mund "unreinen" Reime ist mal das Ostfränkische, mal das Schwäbische, mal das Mitteldeutsche, zumeist sind solche Reime dem Auge annehmbarer als dem Ohr. Es sind schon Lesereime, auf der Bühne wahrscheinlich von leicht komischer Wirkung, wie man sich überhaupt vor Augen halten muß, daß den komischen Figuren der Schwänke die Aufgabe, die natürliche Lautgebung leicht zu verbiegen, nur willkommen sein konnte. Ich würde mich hüten, die phonologische Beweiskraft dieser Reime zu hoch zu veranschlagen.

Unter die *a*-Reime ist mit Recht aufgenommen zusammen : *prosemen*. Doch ist es falsch, für Ayrer eine Doppelform anzusetzen (K. 99). Fries: *Spiegel der Arznei*, Straßburg 1518 schreibt schon *prosame*, und das Lutherwort *brosame* findet sich in der gleichen Lazarus-Geschichte, die Ayrer im Auge hat, schon 1551 bei dem Schweizer Balz; alem. und schwäb. Wörterbücher weisen die *a*-Form schon um 1530 nach. K., der bei seinen Wortansätzen immer vom Mhd. ausgeht, wird zur Annahme einer Doppelform verleitet, weil er 2404.21 *brosem* mißversteht. Gemeint ist (Reim zu *lassen*) *brossem* = *Brustknospen*, als *Bröschen* und *Bries* für die Brustdrüse des Kalbes noch erhalten.—3185.34 (nicht 37) lese ich statt des Reims *arm* : *barbe* lieber *bärbe* : *ärbe*.—*Bauradern* bringe ich nicht in Beziehung zu mhd. *brunnadern*, wofür nur lokal *burnader*, das

wieder nur lokal zu *bürnader* gelängt sein könnte. Die *Bauernader* ist wahrscheinlich identisch mit der *Goldader*, d.i. der *Hämorrhoid*. — 2539.5 ist *krapfen* sicher nicht "eine Art Backwerk" sondern *Karpfen*, wozu der *Straßburger Blindenführer* von 1526 zu vergleichen ist, der die gleiche Bedeutung *Schlemmer* belegt. — Über meine Auffassung von *schemen* im Reim zu -amen, emen vgl. PBB 47 (1923), 5.

Das führt zu den e-Reimen weiter, dem besten Teil der Arbeit, die hier auf Bloomfields gediegener Untersuchung "The E-sounds in the Language of Hans Sachs" (*Modern Philology*, IX [1911/12], 489-509) sicher fußt. Einige fehlerhafte Ansätze wären vermieden worden, hätte K. ein so wichtiges Buch wie Pauls *Mhd. Gram.* in einer neueren Auflage als der von 1918 (!) benutzt. Dann wäre noch deutlicher zum Ausdruck gekommen, daß Ayer unempfindlich ist gegen Quantitäten, aber die "offenen" e-Laute (ë, ä, è) von den geschlossenen" (é, ö, œ, ê) getrennt hält. Mosers Satz (*Histor.-grammat. Einführung in die früh-nhd. Schriftdialekte* [Halle 1909] § 70, Anm. 12), daß für die Mehrzahl der Dichter des 16. Jh. die etymologisch verschiedenen e-Laute in einen zusammenfallen, ist also viel zu allgemein. Das hatte uns schon Bloomfield gezeigt, nun erweist K. es auch für Ayer. K.s Liste "unreiner" Reime ist umfangreicher als die Bloomfields, was den Eindruck hervorruft, Ayers Dichterei sei lässiger. Davon kann in Wahrheit nicht die Rede sein, die meisten solcher "unreiner" e-Reime lassen sich als "reine" aufklären; ich denke, darüber einmal im Zusammenhang zu handeln. Hier nur folgende Berichtigungen: *herb* kann Primär-Umlaut haben vgl. Schwäb. *Wtb.* 3, 1450; Schweizer. *Idiot.* 2, 1592. — Zum Lautwert von *entferben* vgl. Paul-Gierach, *Mhd. Gram.* § 40 Anm. 2, zu dem von *herre* A. Götsze in *Zs. f. Deutschkunde* 1929, 26. — 3216.9 reimt nicht *hell* sondern *hell* : *gesell*. 3407.19 liegt im Reim zu *bestölln*, *beföln* vor (das ja auch zweimal mit *sēln* reimt!). Und 2422.23 bindet nicht *zelen* : *fälen* sondern : *fēlen*, was schon Ritzert PBB 23 (1890), 174 gezeigt hat. Von 21 "unreinen" Reimen der Gruppe — el + Konsonant bleibt keiner übrig. — E vor Gutturalen sind in 472 Fällen geschieden, in 4 nicht. Ich akzeptiere auch diese vier Reime nicht und ebenso wenig die 6 "unreinen" gegen 1258 reine vor folgendem h. 3170.23 sollte K. statt *geschēhen* : *endlēhen* lesen *geschēn* : *endlēn* (vgl. Paul-Gierach, *Mhd. Gram.* § 179), ebenso 3314.1 *versēn* : *lēn*. — 3135.5 reimt Präpos. *wegen* : *anlegen*, das nicht *ankleiden* meint, wie K. angibt, sondern *anwenden*, worüber Grimms *Wtb.* 1,398 mehr sagt. Diese Bedeutung ist vor Luther nicht belegt, findet sich dann in Kellers *Fastnachtsspielen* 887.33. Leicht konnte das seltne, der Umgangssprache unvertraute Wort mit offenem e artikuliert werden. Die gleiche fehllose Sorgfalt zeigen die e-Reime vor Zischlaut, wo den 558 intakten auch noch 5 "unreine" hinzuzufügen sind (zweimaliges *laesst* : *stoesst* ist am ehesten als umlautloses *lässt* : *stösst* zu begreifen, wozu Näheres bei Paul-Gierach *Mhd. Gram.* § 156 Anm. 1). Es ist unnötig, weitere Einzelheiten anzuführen; gegen 10000 tadellose Reime, in denen etymologisch verschiedene e auseinander gehalten werden, fallen die

"unreinen" nicht ins Gewicht, ob man nun 0,60% zählt wie K. oder 0,22% wie ich. Für die Phonologie Ayrers reicht aus, was K. bringt, die Untersuchung der Gründe der Unreinheit der Reime wird eine Frage der Philologie. Wenn Ayrers Ohr in 99,40% aller Fälle so empfindlich ist, haben wir die Aufgabe zu sehen, was es denn eigentlich mit den Reimen auf sich hat, bei denen sein feines Ohr versagt. K. ist darin zu zurückhaltend.

Ich vermisste eine Betrachtung der Reimgruppen *-ds*, *-ts* : *-z*. Ich werde sie an anderem Ort geben.

Über das eigentliche Thema hinaus führen Betrachtungen wie die über *dunder* statt Nürnberg, *doner*, *Furn* statt *Form*, die md. Form *tran* statt *trene*, den typisch Nürberger Reim *genumen* : *kumen*, alles schon Materialien zu einer *Formenlehre* Ayrers, für die K. nach dieser Probe der rechte Mann wäre.

Kleinere Irrtümer, die der Kundige leicht beseitigt, fallen bei einer Erstlingsarbeit nicht schwer ins Gewicht: In der Bibliographie S.VII ist der Titel von Brenners Artikel zu berichtigten; S.VIII. ist der Druckort von Hoffmanns Buch *Charlottenburg*; Jellineks Aufsatz über die *eu*-Reime steht in PBB 43. — Der Reim 3358.23 (K. 18) ist *schulérern* : *zuhörern*. — *Plab(e)* = *Pfau*; *dapp* = *Tor* dürfen nicht mit langem, *lager* nicht mit kurzem Vokal angesetzt werden. — 2775.18 läßt sich K. durch die Schreibung verführen, der Reim ist tadellos, *ganz* : *tanz*; und 162.13 ist gemeint Genit. *lands* : *schantz* < frz. *chance*! Aber über die ganze Reimgruppe wird bei anderer Gelegenheit zu handeln sein.

Seit Bloomfields meisterlichem Hans Sachs Aufsatz von 1912 hat ein heilloser Respekt die jungen Gelehrten von diesem Feld ferngehalten. Ich freue mich herzlich, daß eine so tüchtige Arbeit wie diese den langen Bann gebrochen hat. Wir brauchen Dutzende von ähnlichen Untersuchungen, um eine früh-nhd. Grammatik wagen zu können. Es soll sich ja nicht wiederholen, was mit dem Mittelhochdeutschen geschah, dessen Grammatik festgesetzt wurde, bevor man die Texte wirklich so las, wie sie geschrieben waren.

ARNO SCHIROKAUER

*Yale University*

*Foundations of Language*. By LOUIS H. GRAY. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939. Pp. xvi + 530. \$7.50.

The aim of this book "has been to present, as far as our present state of knowledge permits, an encyclopedic compendium of linguistics in a single volume; and, since Indo-European is the branch most studied, to give, at the same time, an introduction to Indo-European linguistics as a whole . . ." (p. vii). It is written not only for the

technical linguist, but also for the university student and the general public.

The author discusses the nature of language, phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etymology, and adds a classification of the Indo-European and the Non-Indo-European languages and a history of the study of languages. The student beginning the study of linguistics will appreciate especially the chapter on etymology and the linguistic method and also the incorporation of the bibliography in the body of the text. The latter was used by the author to allow giving an estimate of the value of the works cited.

It seems odd that Dr. Gray should have allowed some of his own philosophical ideas to creep into the book when on various occasions he pointed out errors of the earlier philosophers ("one quaint gem" from Aulus Gellius [p. 279]: "There is little place for guesses in etymology, or, indeed, in any department of linguistics; and the results of guessing often leave the linguist uncertain whether to laugh or to weep at the folly of the guesser" [p. 280]). Thus: "faults [of any given language] as compared with other languages" (p. 9); in the early stages language progresses "from the vague and undefined to the specific and detailed . . ." (pp. 22, 252), yet on p. 261 the "connotation [of words] may have become so vague" that they were displaced; language "must be adaptive if it is to survive as a vital force" (p. 97); losses take place "through phonetic decay" and "it does not seem pedantic to regard such losses as retrogressions" (p. 98); "language either grows or decays" (p. 105); "more developed languages" (p. 179); "late stage of linguistic development" (p. 325); "speaking in most general terms, language may, in many particulars, be said to develop in cyclic form" (p. 155). The time is not ripe for generalizations. Linguistic science must first make an analytic study of many language families. Deductions based on the incomplete knowledge of one or two language families can not be expected to apply to languages in general.

The use of subjective terms in descriptions are of little value and should be eliminated for the sake of the future scholars ("pronunciation of the first [i.e., American English of New England] is relatively flat and sharp" [p. 348]). We need only recall the persistence of terms such as "hard" and "soft" as applied to consonants and "light" and "dark" as applied to vowels.

In the table of illustrations for the various vowel sounds (p. 56), the German words *Straße*, *über*, *schön* are transcribed as if with a short vowel, whereas in the Standard German they have a long vowel.

In the discussion of dissimilation there is one sentence which does not make sense. In the paragraph beginning "Dissimilation not infrequently causes entire disappearance of one of the phonemes concerned . . ." (p. 70), there appears this sentence: "Vocalic dissimilation appears in contiguous position especially in the phenomenon of *diphthongisation*, or the resolution of a long vowel into two

short ones, as in German *Bein* [bain] or English *bone* [boun] as contrasted with Anglo-Saxon *bán* [ba:n] or Dutch *been* [be:n]." This is certainly an unusual use of the word "dissimilation," and, besides, in the German *Bein* we have no example of diphthongization.

The typographical errors noted are: the phonetic transcription of *Schwester* (p. 52); substitution (p. 263); Paris, 1923 (p. 453); and on page 63 there seems to be an omission of a line beginning with the comma in line seven.

HERMAN C. MEYER

*University of Washington*

*The Construction *ānō kouov* in the Germanic Languages.* By HERBERT DEAN MERITT. Stanford University: Language and Literature Series, Vol. VI, No. 2, 1938. Pp. 114. \$1.25 paper; \$2.00 cloth.

In the introduction the author surveys the many divergent opinions concerning the exact nature and origin of the *ānō kouov* construction. The previous studies of this subject were mainly based on individual branches or periods of the Germanic languages. In this study Dr. Meritt sets out to survey the entire Old and Middle Germanic field and give a definite answer concerning the origin of this syntactical construction, and presents a good analysis of the use of the *ānō kouov* construction in the poetry of these periods. In Chapter V there is also a good study of the attributive-clause construction, called in German the "*hiez-Konstruktion*," and its similarity to *ānō kouov*.

To the usual definition of the *ānō kouov* construction the author adds the clause, that the common element "is not felt to belong more closely with the first part than with the second" (p. 16). The inclusion of this variable in the definition forewarns that we shall not all be able to agree with him on all the examples tabulated. Thus, on p. 17: "If on any ground it can be shown that there is a feeling of a common element, such a construction as the following is considered *ānō kouov*:

Tatian 269, 5: Tho antlingita ther ander increbota inan."

However, upon examination of the context, we find that the phrase continues with "*sus quendenti . . .*" This literally translates the Latin: *Respondens autem alter increpabat illum dicens*. If we keep in mind that in the Old High German period the verb was generally used without a pronominal subject, we should therefore feel this to be a case of asyndetic parataxis. Dr. Meritt calls attention to this uncertainty in his comparison of *ānō kouov* with asyndetic parataxis in the Old High German Tatian (pp. 86-89). Yet he believes that some of the

cases of asyndetic parataxis allow an  $\delta\pi\delta \kappa\omega\nu\delta$  interpretation. It is, however, extremely doubtful whether our twentieth-century feeling (or better, response to this specific language situation) can be a reliable guide to what the ninth-century monk felt when he read the Tatian.

In the last chapter we read: "it is noticeable that  $\delta\pi\delta \kappa\omega\nu\delta$  occurs most frequently in poetry" (p. 110). This may be true, but it is hardly a valid deduction on the basis of the works which Dr. Meritt used for this study. In the Middle Germanic period there is no prose represented at all and in the Old Germanic period the most of the prose originated through translation (the Gothic Bible, Tatian, Alfred's translations of Orosius and Bede). Translated material can never be placed on a par with original works as a source for syntactical features, especially where the translation is quite literal.

HERMAN C. MEYER

*University of Washington*

*Die Schweiz und Italien, Kulturbeziehungen aus zwei Jahrhunderten.* By LAVINIA MAZZUCCHETTI and ADELHEID LOHNER. Zürich-Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Benziger Publ., 1941. Pp. 487. \$5.00.

A Swiss and an Italian woman, both acquainted, through years of personal contact and thorough-going study, with the culture of their two countries have cooperated in the task of gathering documents relating to the history of the cultural relations between Switzerland and Italy. Because this relationship has been so long-standing, the authors had to limit their imposing volume to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Obviously, not all phases of the subject could be covered. For example, what Italy meant to the Catholic and what it meant to the artist could only be hinted at. It is to the credit of the two authors that in spite of these temporal and thematic limits they brought forth a book which offers a well rounded, colorful picture of the times.

The tremendous amount of material—letters, descriptions, proclamations, poems, newspaper articles, and documents of all kinds—is classified in seven chapters. The individual parts are joined by connecting text, explanations, notes, and biographical sketches. The first section, "Italians See Switzerland," deals with Italian opinions about the little neighboring country to the North; it gives proof of Italian enthusiasm for Salomon Gessner and Albrecht von Haller, and judgments about Johann Caspar Lavater and some of his contemporaries. We learn how Switzerland became the travel goal of the Romantics, and we hear the voices of political observers (Cavour, etc.) who studied the political machinery of

Switzerland as a model for a future Italian state. The chapter "Switzerland as a Refuge" is built around the name of Giuseppe Mazzini. However, the relationship between the two countries is, like every genuine connection, a reciprocal one. This is revealed by the chapters "The Italian Experience" and "Switzerland as Trail Breaker." We find documents which point to the threads which were spun between Berne and the Lombardian enlightenment. We see Italy as the destination of Swiss artists—Goethe's friend Heinrich Meyer, also Ludwig Hess, Karl Stauffer-Bern, and Arnold Böcklin. We get a few samples of the studies in race psychology of such a talented and too-much-neglected Swiss author as Karl Viktor von Bonstetten. Literary voices of the nineteenth century follow: Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, Johann Jakob Bachofen, and Heinrich Federer, all of whom were decidedly influenced in their artistic development by their connection with Italy. Probably the climax of the book comes in the pages dedicated to Jacob Burckhardt. After Goethe, perhaps no man born north of the Alps was so strongly and definitely influenced in his whole being by Italy, and no other has been able to interpret that country in such a convincing and expressive manner as Burckhardt, the son of a patrician family in Basel, who was born on the borderline where Romanic and German culture came into contact.

We can indicate the breadth of the book with only a few more names such as Johann Jakob Bodmer who discovered for German-speaking countries the importance of Dante, or Madame de Staél who projected a warmhearted picture of the Italian people. "Pedagogical Influences," "Mercenaries and Volunteers," "Friendships and Encounters" complete the picture of a long, fruitful friendship between two neighbors, a friendship which had to overcome all sorts of obstacles. Sharp criticism and misunderstandings were not lacking, and it is especially noteworthy that this collection does not leave out such negative appraisals. For such things can often enough illuminate the character of a people surprisingly well, and can prevent its special features from fading out in one-sided admiration.

The wish of the authors to appeal especially to the German-speaking part of Switzerland occasioned the translating of all Italian documents into German. French sources are rendered in the original language, and some valuable Italian samples are reproduced in the appendix. All material dealing with scholarly studies in this field was skillfully used and evaluated. We regret that no bibliography was added to the volume; the index, however, is excellent. As far as the genesis of the work, the method of selection, and the technique of editing are concerned, the whole undertaking deserves great recognition.

DIETER CUNZ

*University of Maryland*

*Studies in Honor of John Albrecht Walz.* Edited by F. O. N[OLTE], H. W. P[FUND], and G. J. M[ETCALF]. Lancaster, Pa.: The Lancaster Press, 1941. Pp. vii + 335.

These *Studies* present fifteen competent articles by fifteen competent scholars—all former graduate students under Professor Walz at Harvard University. Aside from the high caliber of the studies themselves, it is an added testimonial to the training and inspiration these men received from Professor Walz that each of the authors is to be found listed in the 1942 *Directory of American Scholars*. Fittingly enough, the handsome, specially bound volume honoring Professor Walz, was presented to him on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, at which time he also enjoyed the honor of being President of the Modern Language Association of America.

It would be futile to attempt to comment in a review on each of the contributions to this work. Accordingly, they are merely mentioned by title for the convenience of our readers: Philip Allison Shelley, "Niclas Müller, German-American Patriot"; Archer Taylor, "Zwischen Pfingsten und Straßburg"; Israel S. Stamm, "A Note on Kleist and Kant"; Walter Silz, "Goethe's *Auf dem See*"; R-M. S. Heffner, "Notes on Walther's Use of *können* and *mögen*"; Albert F. Buffington, "English Loan Words in Pennsylvania German"; O. W. Long, "Werther in America"; Harry W. Pfund, "George Henry Calvert, Admirer of Goethe"; Charles F. Barnason, "Early Danish and Swedish Writers on Native History"; W. F. Twaddell, "Functional Burdening of Stressed Vowels in German"; Thomas K. Brown, Jr., "Goethe's *Lila* as a Fragment of the Great Confession"; Fred O. Nolte, "Art and Reality"; George J. Metcalf, "Abstractions as Forms of Address in Fifteenth Century German"; Alan Holske, "Stifter and the Biedermeier Crisis"; Wolfgang Philip von Schmertzing, "Mittelhochdeutsche Jägerwörter vom Hund."

Finally, Professor Shelley has gathered together a bibliography of Professor Walz's rich and fruitful investigations extending from 1896 to the present, a worthy goal which many of Professor Walz's students consider well worthy of emulation to judge from the valuable productivity of so many of those who have sat under the master.

CURTIS C. D. VAIL

University of Washington

*Two Aspects of Chivalry: Pulci and Boiardo.* By GIACOMO GRILLO. Boston: The Excelsior Press, 1942. Pp. xi + 59. \$1.00.

Here is an interesting introduction to Pulci and Boiardo: not an ordered analysis or a new valuation of the two poets' transformations of chivalry, but rather the spontaneous appreciation of a mind filled with a large subject. The engaging title remains a happy con-

tribution to scholarship, amplified as it is by several equally intriguing insights scattered through the pages: philosophical ideas of the poets, artistic intentions, peculiarities of style. Development of these points, however, has yielded to other matters: biography of the poets, minor works, sources of and borrowings from the *Morgante* and *Orlando Innamorato*, and a narration of some episodes, all necessarily dispatched with a certain rapidity. Opinions and *aperçus* of earlier critics are brought together with discrimination and a touching modesty. On occasion, acknowledgment of a debt is neglected. Thus a sentence on p. 21, lines 4-6, will also be found on p. 30 of Lewis Einstein's "Luigi Pulci and the *Morgante Maggiore*," in *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, XXII (1902). This is certainly an oversight, however, for Einstein's monograph is cited at other points, and mechanical slips do abound, together with some slips of the English tongue. Prior studies might be brought up, on the other hand, that should have been included, e.g., the "reinterpretation" of the *Morgante* a decade ago by G. Berzero (see J. G. Fucilla's *Universal Author Repertory of Italian Essay Literature*, reviewed in this issue); R. D. Waller's judicious essay placing Pulci against the history of the burlesque epic, in *University of Manchester Studies*, CLXXII (1926); and G. B. Weston's masterly edition of the *Morgante*, *Scrittori d'Italia* 131-2 (1930). The chapter on Boiardo, half as long as that on Pulci, is followed by an Appendix comprising very brief essays on Bembo and Sanazzaro, and a useful page of Bibliography.

HOWARD LEE NOSTRAND

*University of Washington*

*Studies on the Literary Salon in France, 1550-1615.* By L. CLARK KEATING. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941. Pp. 172. \$2.50.

Judging by the qualities which Mr. L. Clark Keating reveals in his study of salon life in France in the second half of the sixteenth century, one cannot help thinking that it is highly regrettable that he was not better advised as to the choice and the arrangement of his material. Mr. Keating shows that he has scholarly gifts. He writes clearly and simply and his contribution to the understanding of literature under the last Valois kings is by no means negligible. It is obvious that he had to limit his subject to a certain number of salons and one could naturally expect that he would have chosen the most important or the most interesting. Instead of that he wastes twenty pages (pp. 49-69) on two pedantic "*précieuses ridicules*," the Dames des Roches, and ten pages on the Académies of Charles IX and Henry III, which had nothing of the nature of a salon; a total of

thirty pages which he could have devoted to the salon life in Lyon, for example. It seems, in fact, almost incredible that Mr. Keating could treat his subject without a single mention of the Ecole de Lyon even in the sections entitled "The Influence of Italy" (p. 11) and "Platonism" (p. 14). In Lyon he would have found, among others, the salon of Maurice Scève and his sisters, and above all the salon of Louise Labé. "Her house was the rendezvous of all the cultured and learned of Lyons, a sort of *Académie* over which she presided . . .," wrote Lula McDowell Richardson in a study which Mr. Keating does not mention in his bibliography.<sup>1</sup> Every writer of any importance, passing through Lyon on his way to Italy, was received and entertained by the Belle Cordière. In 1550, her salon was at the height of its fame. Four years later it originated the beautiful poems that Louise and Olivier de Magny exchanged and, at least until 1559, musicians, poets, lawyers, humanists continued to gather in the elegant house of the Rue Confort. Mr. Keating seems not to know about it, although I am certain that he does. Why does he keep so silent, then? Does he think that Louise Labé has been so thoroughly studied that she deserves to be left in peace? I would answer that George Diller has exhausted the subject of the Dames des Roches and that it was quite useless to summarize the result of his investigations. Did Mr. Keating consider that Louise Labé was too important to be included in a volume which had to be kept within 150 pages? In this case, he should have left out also the salons of Marguerite de France and of Marguerite de Valois and entitled his book: "Studies on the minor salons in France . . ." The reader would then have understood why he limited himself to the salons of Jean de Morel, of the Dames des Roches, of M. and Mme de Villeroy and of M. and Mme de Retz. But such a title would have left unexplained the presence of the two Academies. The very essence of a salon is to be a social gathering with no formal organization and above all no financial questions involved. The Academy of Charles IX was a kind of "Society of Friends of Music," the members of which had to pay a fee and could be expelled if they failed to comply with the very strict regulations established by Baïf and his associates. Nothing could be farther from the salon than such an Academy. The same thing could be said of the Academy of Henry III which was no more a salon than the actual Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques or the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

If we forget these two hors-d'œuvre, chapter III, "Society in the Entourage of the Court," is by far the most satisfactory of the volume. Information about the Villeroy's salon is not easily obtainable, and only few people had access to the *Album*. Thanks to Mr. Keating's careful analysis of this rare document those interested in the "Querelle des Femmes" will be able to add an item to their bibli-

<sup>1</sup> *The Forerunners of Feminism in French Literature of the Renaissance from Christine de Pisan to Marie de Gournay* (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1929, p. 107).

ography. The salon of Mme de Retz is equally well presented and shows an intelligent use of the few documents that Mr. Keating was in a position to consult. The Parisian salon of Marguerite de Valois could not be thoroughly analysed in 13 pages (pp. 125-138) and I suspect that the author, who only refers timidly to certain aspects of sixteenth-century life, would have been ill at ease in a complete survey of Marguerite's sources of inspiration. He would have had to mention, among other dialogues, "*La Ruelle mal assortie*" written in praise of Bajaumont, handsome cadet de Gascogne, and to modify his statement: "In platonism, above all, Marguerite was really at home, and she showed herself eager for primary material." She may have ordered a few translations of Plato, but that was not enough to make her a champion of platonism like her great-aunt, Marguerite de Navarre.

One must take *Studies of the Literary Salon in France, 1550-1615* as what it is: a fragmentary survey of some of the precursors of the seventeenth-century "précieux" salons. As such, it is a valuable contribution, and the student of sixteenth-century French life will consult it with profit.

MAURICE EDGAR COINDREAU

*Princeton University*

*Marivaux, A Study in Eighteenth-Century Sensibility.* By RUTH KIRBY JAMIESON. New York: King's Crown Press (a branch of the Columbia University Press), 1942. Pp. 202.

One of the characteristics of modern eighteenth-century scholarship is to stress more and more the growth of feeling in the Age of Reason. The age-old conflict of the mind and the heart which assumed an unprecedented importance in the years 1750-1800, and transformed the dominant trends of French Classical Literature, has been the subject of much contemporary criticism. Practically all of our critics now regard the movement of sensibility as the really vital movement of eighteenth-century thought, and since it lies at the roots of Rousseauism, Diderot's nature philosophy, and the whole subsequent romantic movement, it has been studied not only for its vitality in the eighteenth century, but for its subsequent manifestations. This critical movement started seriously with Professor Lanson's thesis upon *Nivelle de la Chaussée et la Comédie larmoyante*, and continued throughout the present twentieth century, culminating in Professor Trahard's *Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (4 vols., 1931), and the last part of Professor Hazard's *Crise de la conscience européenne* (3 vols., 1935). More important in this respect even than the *Crise* is Professor Hazard's "L'Homme de sentiment" published in 1938 in the *Romanic Review*. One would think after such an array of distinguished critical litera-

ture that Miss Jamieson's thesis upon Marivaux would be entirely unnecessary.

I think a judgment of this sort would be very erroneous. In spite of the extensive bibliography upon the subject of sensibility, a bibliography which Miss Jamieson incidentally has taken great pains to assemble and control, we still do not agree exactly upon the definition of sensibility, nor are we in agreement as to when the movement started, what were its underlying causes, nor indeed how it developed. Miss Jamieson has quoted in her introduction the definitions of Professors Lanson and Saintsbury on one hand and Professor Trahard on the other in order to show just how greatly interpretations of the movement can vary. Her own preliminary definition ("that curious blending of affectation and genuine sentiment which flourished in the century of the enlightenment") is scarcely more adequate, although we should hasten to add that her careful analysis of the ingredients which combine to produce the sensibility of Marivaux compensates for this inadequacy.

At first glance, Miss Jamieson's study appears to be a re-working of Professor Trahard's first chapter (vol. I) upon Marivaux. Her study, however, is much more complete than Professor Trahard's and differs from his in several important respects. In the first place, Miss Jamieson treats Marivaux not as a precursor of sensibility, but as a writer whose sensibility has a distinct flavor. Secondly, she regards him not as a writer who stands upon the threshold of the movement, but as one who best expresses the sensibility of a social group. Thirdly, she has stressed particularly sensibility in the novels of Marivaux and given less attention to the plays, whereas Professor Trahard has done the contrary. And last of all, Miss Jamieson has been primarily concerned with the analysis of the peculiar ingredients of Marivaux' sensibility rather than with the larger definitions of eighteenth-century sensibility.

Her work thus falls into three parts. The opening chapter, "Marivaux and the Salons," is an analysis of the works of Mme de Lambert. The purpose of this analysis is to establish the ideas of the milieu in which Marivaux lived. The task of analyzing Mme de Lambert's works had already been performed by J. P. Zimmermann in "La Morale laïque au commencement du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in the *Revue d'Historie Littéraire* (1917), 42-63 and 440-465. Zimmermann's analysis is really more complete and he has also been more successful in showing Mme de Lambert's position in the full movement of ideas. Miss Jamieson's point of view is slightly different, to be sure. She is preoccupied more with showing Marivaux' position in the current of ideas of the salons. This attitude needs no justification, of course. But, as we shall see, it falls singularly short in historical perspective.

The second part of Miss Jamieson's work consists of several chapters devoted to a study of the ingredients which make up Marivaux' sensibility. I pass over the second chapter upon "Les Effets

surprenants de la sympathie" which, being really out of place, is an encumbrance to the development of the argument. Chapter III on "The Sensitive Heart," Chapter IV on "Amour-propre," Chapter V on "Amour tendresse," the supplemental Chapter VI, devoted to these qualities as seen in the theatre, Chapter VII on the "Morality of Sentiment" and Chapter VIII upon "Humanitarianism" are full presentations of these qualities of Marivaux' sensibility. One might wish perhaps that Miss Jamieson had taken fuller cognizance of the Hazard article in her chapter on the Sensitive Heart. One might also criticize a little her failure to control fully the first chapter of Hermann's *Les Idées morales de Diderot*, and to distinguish clearly Zimmermann's importance in her chapter upon the Morality of Sentiment. One might rather severely censure the attempts which she makes to connect Marivaux' ideas with those of Shaftesbury and of Mandeville. And last of all one might regret sincerely that she made no attempt in her chapter upon Amour-propre to distinguish clearly Marivaux' views on self-esteem from the views upon the same subject which circulated from La Rochefoucauld to Helvétius. Nor has she seen the possible relationship between La Bruyère's *Caractères* and Marivaux' novels in respect to "Humanitarianism." I should add that although these omissions are regrettable, these subjects are not absolutely required by Miss Jamieson's conception of her task. Nor does their absence detract from the really excellent analysis which she makes of Marivaux' sensibility.

Had they been made, however, we should have been better prepared for the third part of the work. In this chapter entitled "Sense and Sensibility," Miss Jamieson has noted the limitations of the author's sensibility and its transitional nature. From the very first part of the study she has adopted the thesis that "the interpenetration of reason and emotion is the central problem in dealing with the sensibility of Marivaux," and much of this chapter is designed to show this. In her opinion it is this interpenetration which distinguishes Marivaux from the Rousseau-Diderot group. Hence his limitations, such as his disregard for nature, his lack of interest in primitivism, and his relative unconcern with romantic nostalgia, are readily explained. But the turn which Marivaux' brand of sensibility took in becoming the sensibility of Diderot and Rousseau is not yet clear. In this connection, one should ponder a short sentence in *Marianne* (Edition Duviquet, II, 99) : "Vous savez bien qu'on a du sentiment avant que d'avoir de l'esprit . . ." By a curious fate, this sentence is repeated almost textually in Rousseau's *Profession de foi*. It is indeed one of his fundamental assertions.

If we have spent some time in considering what Miss Jamieson has not done, it is not with any assumption whatever that we could do these things whereas she could not. Her work which is very creditable indeed both for the soundness of her basic position, and the thoroughness of her investigation, is a distinct contribution. Marivaux' material has been used with painstaking care and ana-

lyzed with a perspicacity not always present in previous scholars who have treated the subject. Thanks to her, the nature of Marivaux' sensibility is now clear. His relationship in the movement of sensibility needs further amplification. One dares not suggest that she should rewrite Professor Trahard's four tomes. With her basic assumptions and her careful method she is certainly equipping herself to do so.

IRA WADE

*Princeton University*

*Beethoven in France: The Growth of an Idea.* By LEO SCHRADE. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942. Pp. xi + 271. \$3.00.

Professor Schrade has chosen a good subject. Much can be learned about nations and individuals, about the history of the arts and the nature of criticism, from following the fortunes of an artistic reputation at home or abroad. In tracing Beethoven's fame in France from 1800 to the present, the author has had to examine a great variety of opinions—those of politicians, poets, journalists as well as musicians—and he has displayed commendable patience and thoroughness. The result is a compendium of, or at least a guide to, the relevant material, but I do not think it is an entirely, or even moderately, acceptable account of its subject.

From the first sentence of the Preface—"The history of Beethoven in France is one of the strangest chapters in the records of the human mind"—the atmosphere and the author's attitude betray a kind of intelligent non-comprehension. Why should Beethoven-worship in France be "strange"? Is there no record of Shakespeare idolatry in other countries? Why is it odd that music should give rise to extraordinary enthusiasms? Is there no such thing as fanatic Wagnerism; and before Wagner, no such thing as Rossini and Meyerbeer cults?

Refusing to see that his chosen movement is explicable enough, Professor Schrade is led to exaggerate certain opinions, to misunderstand others, to make wide circuits into political history—*vide* Chapter V on France during the Dreyfus Affair—and generally to submerge in would-be deep soundings an artistic and intellectual current that is quite normal and human precisely in its frequent follies and irrationalities.

The author being consistent in his outlook, his deviations from sense (as they seem to me) cannot be enumerated in detail. Every page contributes to his effect—and to my list of objections. A sampling must suffice. First of all, Professor Schrade gives an entirely erroneous impression of Berlioz's attitude and function in the story. He says that Berlioz taught the French to see Beethoven as he, Berlioz, saw him. Now if we except the musicians of the eighties

and nineties, Berlioz never taught the French anything. In the second place, Berlioz's writings on Beethoven by no means consist wholly of the "poetic" extracts that Professor Schrade gives us. The amount of technical criticism in Berlioz would unfit him today for the post of newspaper critic which he then held. If anything, it is our age that has gone "poetic" and fanciful, not his. But Professor Schrade is bent on building up the picture of a "Romantic figure" (his heading for Part I) and, as usual, the "romanticism" is *appliquéd* upon the facts after being first manufactured out of partial observations.

I do not mean to imply that there is animus in Mr. Schrade's descriptions. He intends to be fair, but he does not see far enough around his subject. For instance, he has a passage on tears as a means of interpreting music—as if anyone had ever made profession of being an exclusive lachrymosist. The expression of strong feeling or intense thought by weeping is a matter of social convention, nothing else. It was that tough pamphleteer, Voltaire, who said that the best works were those which made one weep the most; and it was that sensitive soul of the romantic period, Chateaubriand, who disputed it. The mention of tears by Berlioz, Liszt, Paganini or anyone else, is simply a sign, couched in contemporary language, of the profound effect caused by some piece of music. If a modern critic writes that he was deeply moved by somebody's music, he is saying exactly the same thing, though getting the credit for being infinitely more "rational" than "the romantics." And the same holds true of other linguistic differences. We say Bach stands higher in our esteem than any other musician. They said that "Beethoven was an eagle."

Mr. Schrade's difficulty with period idiom extends damagingly to his handling of any French text whatsoever. It is no wonder that so many of his quotations look silly. Scudo, for example, was a fifth-rate critic with an abominable disposition, but he never wrote that the first movement of the Ninth was "of a punctilious parturition." Mr. Schrade might have spared himself the exclamation point in brackets after this nonsense. What Scudo wrote was that to him the movement was making an awful fuss about getting born, which is false but makes sense.

Too many examples of this type of misunderstanding mar Mr. Schrade's pages. They are of a piece with his inability to gauge the merit of his authors. Suarès, for example, is cited as a great modern thinker, on the strength of a friendly remark to that effect. Nor would the uninformed reader ever guess that Victor Hugo was quite unmusical and admired Beethoven on principle, as Shakespeare praised music.

In short, Mr. Schrade's work is more praiseworthy in its intent than in its execution. It is not to be scorned or discarded, but amended in its judgments by the light of a fuller knowledge of the period, tradition, language, and literature of France.

JACQUES BARZUN

Columbia University

*The Italian Questione della Lingua.* By ROBERT A. HALL, JR. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Studies in Romance Languages and Literature, No. 4, 1942. Pp. 66. 50 cents.

This essay is no attempt at a detailed study of the subject. It is, as the author indicates, interpretative, and for greater detail in factual matters the reader is referred to the treatises of Vivaldi, Belardinelli, and Mme Labande-Jeanroy. However, this essay serves a very useful purpose in that it gives one a clear conception of the intricacies of the question which was the subject of debate for six hundred years, and the reasons for its final solution.

The *questione della lingua* had its inception in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and its severe condemnation of the Tuscan dialect. Dante, then, in search of a noble literary language, concludes that such a language does exist, not in any one of the local dialects of Italy, but over and above all of them, in elements (primarily of vocabulary) common to all the dialects. He uses what he considers to be such a language in his *Commedia*, and Boccaccio and Petrarch use a similar tongue. For a century after Dante's death literary activity in the vernacular is mostly confined to Tuscany, and the language seems to show much uniformity, first to be conspicuously broken by Luigi Pulci in his *Morgante maggiore*. Pulci was a Florentine and his language is essentially as Tuscan as that of his contemporaries in the literary field, but he was writing burlesque, and introduced many new words which may have been taken from contemporary Florentine slang and some which he coined himself to heighten the burlesque effect. For the same reason he may have intentionally misspelled words in imitation of some of the peculiar pronunciations which he heard on the street. A burlesque writer is almost never a purist. His contemporaries excuse him for that.

One point that is scarcely sufficiently explained in the history of the *questione* is the reason for its sudden outbreak in the year 1500. The statement is simply made that the first outbreak of polemic came in connection with the anti-Tuscan movement which first appeared in the *Cinquecento* under the guise of a doctrine favoring the use of a "courtly" type of speech ("lingua cortigiana") instead of one more narrowly Tuscan (p. 14). It may have been the publication of Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* in 1487 (partial), 1495, and again in 1506 that brought the *questione della lingua* to the fore. Here was a great poem written in a language which purported to be Italian, but reeked of Lombardy and Emilia! The cultural leadership of Tuscany and Florence was threatened, especially as Boiardo was attached to the rival court of Ferrara! If Boiardo had survived the first complete edition of the *Orlando* (1495), the criticism of his language might have resolved itself into a personal attack upon him, but as he died in 1494 it became fused with the more academic *questione della lingua*. Very naturally Trissino and Castiglione lined themselves up

as anti-Tuscans while Machiavelli upheld the Tuscan side. In 1531 Berni completed his Tuscan *rifacimento* of Boiardo's poem which was published in 1542 and which, in Florence at least, was better known than the original for nearly two centuries. When one compares the original with the *rifacimento* one has to admit that the *rifacimento* has a more even flow and is more polished.

When Machiavelli took his stand on the Tuscan side of the question (*Dialogo intorno alla nostra lingua*, 1514 ca.), he pointed out irrefutably the close concordance of standard Italian with Florentine not only in vocabulary, but also in phonetic and morphological structure. He ended by calling up the spirit of Dante to admit that the Divine Comedy was written in Florentine, not some kind of "italiano comune," notwithstanding the presence of some loan-words (p. 16). How can we reconcile Dante's condemnation of Tuscan with Machiavelli's findings that Dante's language is Florentine? I believe that the answer is to be found in a confusion of terms. When Machiavelli spoke of Florentine he probably meant the language as it was spoken by his friends and associates, the language that he heard daily in Florence. When Dante used the term he was probably referring to the language of the lower classes, or that of the *Mercato vecchio*. In every large city there are several dialects belonging to different social strata. As indicated by Fanfani (Papanti, G., *I Parlari italiani in Certaldo*, p. 19) Salviati in 1584 perpetrated a hoax in giving a transcription of one of Boccaccio's *novelle* into the dialect of the *Mercato vecchio* to support his pro-Florentine stand on the *questione*. This hoax was both unnecessary and stupid because Salviati himself should have recognized a variety of dialects within the city and not have labelled his version as of the *Mercato vecchio* when it was more like that of the *Piazza del duomo*, and, perhaps, touched up at that!

Dr. Hall's Chapter IV, on scientific progress made in linguistics through debate of the *questione*, and Chapter V, on the significance of the *questione*, are especially interesting. Appendix I, giving a chronological table of the principal documents with the classification of each (Tuscan, anti-Tuscan, archaic, or anti-archaic) is also very useful. Whether or not the *questione* was precipitated by the publication of the *Innamorato* and whether or not the rivalry of the houses of Este, Sforza, and Borgia with that of the Medici and the Florentine Republic was important in its discussion, we must agree with Dr. Hall's closing statement: "The debates of the *Questione della lingua* in the Cinquecento and following centuries have the following significance, therefore: they were not a cause, but an effect, of the rise of the *koiné*, and were a faithful reflection of the problems facing standard Italian at the various critical points in its history."

HERBERT H. VAUGHAN

*University of Michigan*

*Universal Author Repertoire of Italian Essay Literature.* By JOSEPH G. FUCILLA. New York: S. F. Vanni, 1941. Pp. 534. \$10.00.

*Motif-Index of the Italian "Novella" in Prose.* By D. P. ROTUNDA. Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, Folklore Series No. 2, 1942. Pp. xxxii + 216. \$2.00.

Professor Fucilla's latest contribution to the scholar's reference shelf is a systematic *dépouillement* of some seventeen hundred volumes of miscellaneous essays published in Italy during the last hundred years. The more than eighteen thousand essays here catalogued deal mainly with Italian literature; but the usefulness of the volume is by no means limited to specialists in Italian. Students of other literatures (not to mention history, psychology, linguistics, and other topics) will find their fields well represented by titles, many of which are not readily traceable elsewhere. Fucilla lists, for example, one hundred and twenty-six essays dealing with Shakespeare, forty-one on Byron, ten on Emerson, fifty-eight on Victor Hugo, sixty-one on Zola, thirty-three on Cervantes, forty-two on Ibsen, seventy-nine on Tolstoy, forty on Plato, one hundred and nineteen on Virgil, six on Tagore, etc. This broad inclusiveness, indicated by the title, deserves to be especially stressed, as the volume will henceforth be an indispensable tool for all students of literature. The arrangement of the book is compact and convenient. A bibliography of the essay volumes, listed by authors, is followed by an index of the contents of the essays, arranged according to the literary and historical figures discussed. Professor Fucilla deserves the gratitude of all scholars for having made available this bibliographical guide to a mass of extremely useful but out-of-the-way material.

Professor Rotunda's *Motif-Index* of the prose *novella* of Italy through the sixteenth century was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor Stith Thompson, and it follows the plan and classification of the latter's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932-1936) in conjunction with which it is designed to be used. A bibliography (pp. xi-xxvi) of the *novelle* analyzed and of numerous studies relating to them precedes the analytical catalogue of the motifs contained in the tales. These are grouped under such general heads as Magic, Tests, the Wise and the Foolish, Deceptions, Sex, etc., with many subdivisions. The various entries are frequently accompanied by cross reference, commentary, or allusion to analogues in folklore or other types of literature. The work represents enormous and intelligent labor and, with the wealth of material it offers, more than fulfills the modest purpose claimed by the author "to give quick and easy reference to the subject matter handled by *novellieri* in prose of three centuries."

The format, appearance and typographical arrangement of both of these volumes are pleasing to the hand and eye. Both should be in all libraries that claim to offer facilities for literary investigation.

CHANDLER B. BEALL

University of Oregon

*The Year's Work in English Studies*, Volumes XIX and XX.  
Edited by FREDERICK S. BOAS. London: Oxford University  
Press, 1940 and 1941. Pp. 275 and 214. \$3.75 each.

With the latter of these two volumes Professor Boas completes his nineteenth year as editor of this series and establishes an endurance record equal to that of Simeon Stylites. For, as everyone knows, Professor Boas and his associates read all the articles in the standard philological journals, and all the books, and reduce them to an intelligible essence. The associates have ebbed and flown as their energies and patience gave out, but Professor Boas has remained like a strong Gibraltar in a sea of paper and pedantry. I do not canonize this group of epitomizers because they read so many learned essays—that is one of the duties and punishments of the academic profession; their glory resides in the fact that with an easy grace they lift a plum of reason from so many quivering puddings of distorted logic and syntax. The dove that brooded over the great abyss must tip its head feathers to them.

Both of these volumes are divided into the customary thirteen sections, and the books and articles falling under the twelve chronological divisions are summarized and commented on. The thirteenth section—Southgate's "Bibliographica"—is probably the most valuable and should be given more space. The number of articles and books mentioned are usually short of the number printed in any given year, and I have often wondered whether these omissions are the result of selection or oversight. Professor Saintsbury indicated no principle of inclusion in the first volume, but I have always supposed that there was a guiding direction of some sort. If there is such a principle, I should like to know about it, for I have long wondered how one differentiated between a just-passable scholarly article and a not-quite-passable paper. Professor Boas and his collaborators seem to include most of the papers printed in established journals. This reactionary method must offend those scholars who publish their articles on Browning's music in *The Etude* or their studies of Spenser's zoology in *The Breeder's Gazette*, but it does not make me unhappy.

The greatest weakness of this undertaking is its extreme politeness. We are occasionally told that a given title is "too ambitious" or that "the slender results" of a paper "hardly justified the effort." On the whole, the contributors are not so congratulatory as are the compilers of American critical bibliographies. The reader of most of the latter works has a feeling that all the authors are either wives or mothers of the bibliographers. In this age, when the desire to publish scholarship is only surpassed by the economic necessity of publishing, the presence of a few acid critics on the thrones of judgment would do much for the improvement of our art. Times have changed since Scaliger could begin an article with "A certain donkey-eared

fool in Lyons," but what has been gained in gentleness has undoubtedly been paid for in other ways.

The *raison d'être* of this publication rests, I believe, in the practice of sharp criticism. In a day of compartmentalized scholarship, there is no justification for a mere abstract volume. The specialist in the eighteenth century will, if he is alert, read all the books and articles in his field as they come out. *The Year's Work*, as an abstract volume is, consequently, valuable only to polymaths, of whom there not many, and to dilettantes, who are all practising as specialists anyhow. If, however, the editor and the coadjutors of this work do not wish to be pricks of conscience, there is still something else that they might do. *The Year's Work* could lawfully become the sole means of publication in the field of literary scholarship. All philological journals might suspend publication. Scholars would then send their papers to Professor Boas, who would throw away most papers, and after reducing the respectable ones to a lucid paragraph, would print them in his annual issue. In this way, a vast amount of time, eyesight, and paper would be saved for better things, and the learned world would lose nothing at all.

DON CAMERON ALLEN

*The Johns Hopkins University*

*Chaucer's Irregular -E. A Demonstration among Monosyllabic Nouns of the Exceptions to Grammatical and Metrical Harmony.* By RUTH BUCHANAN McJIMSEY. New York: King's Crown Press (a branch of the Columbia University Press), 1942. Pp. ix + 248. \$2.00.

In this assembling of Chaucerian irregularities the author has presented a restricted amount of material which should prove useful to the teacher or other student of the poetry of Chaucer, for consultation, especially when one of the little tantalizing exceptions is met with, such as all readers of Chaucer come upon from time to time. Probably most habitual readers of Chaucer have been troubled when the metrical requirements of the line seem to indicate the sounding of final -e before a vowel-beginning word, or, vice versa, the silencing of the -e before a consonant. These exceptions have been carefully set forth in the systematically arranged "Demonstration" which constitutes the major part of this book, and are restricted to modern monosyllabic nouns, including those that have inherited or assumed final -e's during the period preceding Chaucer's day or show only occasional examples of the -e in Chaucer's poetry.

This study is not an attempt to help in the pronunciation of Chaucer's lines, but rather to throw light on the historical development of the monosyllabic nouns under consideration. The author has

assumed, as probably most of us do, that Chaucer had a fine ear for rhythm, and consequently takes it for granted that one can depend upon Chaucer's metres, "that dissyllabic feet are normal in iambic verse." She has also accepted the usual practice of pronouncing the unstressed -e in rhymes at the ends of lines. In addition to this metrical evidence, she has taken into consideration the derivational history of the noun, the relative reliability of the poems involved, and frequency of occurrence of the form. The Chaucer Concordance has been utilized for the study, and the more recent texts have been checked, also.

One or two examples will suffice to show the scope and method of the study. The Anglo-Saxon feminine noun *synn* (Mod. Engl. *sin*) would presumably develop in Middle English without final -e, but among the positive evidence the author has listed some nine examples which occur within the line before consonant-beginning words and therefore should be pronounced with the -e if one accepts the usual rules for Chaucerian metrics, and also she has placed in parallel column some thirty-nine which occur in the rhymes. There remain nearly 300 in the Concordance which are not considered because they occur before vowel-beginning words within the line and presumably should be spoken without the final -e, or else are spelled without the -e. On the other hand, Chaucerian *game* would presumably possess an inherited spoken final -e, and so, while most of the seventy-five examples in the Concordance indicate that the -e was spoken, some four cases are cited in the Demonstration which show a silencing of the -e. Likewise, under *year*, an Anglo-Saxon neuter noun which would normally not develop a final -e, the evidence is presented to show that there are no forms with spoken -e within the line, but fairly numerous cases in the rhymes.

The decisions regarding irregularities have been made, of course, largely on the commonly accepted bases that the metres of Chaucer are usually quite perfect for the line as a whole, and that the unaccented final -e should be pronounced, as a general practice. There are undoubtedly some instances of final -e within the line which might be interpreted differently if one were to admit a slight degree of metrical imperfection, that is to say, the hasty slurring over of an unneeded sound in the iambic foot of Chaucer, and in conclusion it seems well to suggest that even as great an artist as Chaucer may have occasionally turned out a rough unpolished line of verse.

As a whole, the general conclusions tend to substantiate what students of Middle English have been saying about the development of noun forms before and at Chaucer's time, and one can get from this material a somewhat clearer conception of the way Chaucer used words in prose as well as in verse.

ARTHUR G. KENNEDY

Stanford University

*Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age with its Background in Mystical Methodology.* By JOSEPH B. COLLINS. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940. Pp. xiv + 251. \$3.25.

If one accepts the author's liberal interpretation of the term, *Christian Mysticism in the Elizabethan Age with its Background in Mystical Methodology* is an excellent history of Christian mysticism from its beginning through the Renaissance. Close acquaintance with the literature and practices of the Church alone makes possible the assembling of such a body of material.

This historical review, however, merely serves as a background for the interpretation of the mystical elements in Spenser's poetry, notably the *Fowre Hymnes*. Father Collins regards the hymns as a unit, representing the successive stages in the mystical experience: purgation, illumination, and union. He believes in fact that Spenser presents nothing less than "the full methodology of mysticism" (p. 190). A major concern, therefore, is to harmonize the apparently secular material of the first two hymns with the definitely spiritual material of the last two.

Father Collins attempts to make this adjustment by defining Platonism and neo-Platonism as mysticism and then assuming that the idealization of human love after the neo-Platonic scala found in portions of the first two hymns emphasizes "the purificatory element which is prerequisite to a right exercise of heavenly love" (p. 221). He must admit, however, that the three stages he so boldly implies in the terms "full methodology of mysticism" are not sharply drawn, because this idealization of human love in the first two hymns suggests only a mild purgation. But if the outline of the threefold way of Christian mysticism is even superficially present in the *Fowre Hymnes*, why should the first pair of hymns end with a prayer to Venus to use her influence with the lady love to save the lover from doubt and jealousy? Why should satisfaction in the earthly aspect of love receive emphasis in a presentation of the purgative way?

One might ask, also, if the last two hymns had not been written, would any scholar have recognized the first two as an exposition of the purgative way? In fact this stage seems more definitely described in lines 245 to 270 of the third hymn, where Spenser tells the lover to renounce all other loves for love of Christ. Is it not probable that Father Collins reads the hymns backward, imposing the mystic coloring of the last two hymns upon the first two?

While the second stage of Christian mysticism may be discerned in the last part of the third hymn and in the first part of the fourth, the vision of ecstatic union, or the third stage, again combines Christian and neo-Platonic machinery. Father Collins explains this shift by means of the two types of Christian mysticism which he has defined in the historical background of his book. The Theocentric with God as its ideal he believes was originated by Plato, and the Christocentric with Christ as its ideal by the Christians. These two

types are so closely related, he affirms on the authority of Luis de Granada (p. 217), that one easily leads to the other. The quotation from Granada justifies the passage from the Christocentric to the Theocentric, for contemplation of Christ as love naturally leads to contemplation of God as love, but Granada does not explain the shift from the Theocentric to the Christocentric. Consequently, Father Collins has not shown why Spenser starts out with the Theocentric contemplative way in the neo-Platonic steps of the first two hymns, then shifts in the third hymn to the Christocentric pattern, and then in the fourth back to the Theocentric. While Father Collins' suggestion that there is a close relation between the contemplative methods of neo-Platonism and Christian mysticism is interesting in the light of Spenser's use of both in the hymns, his identification of the two as Christian mysticism is not wholly convincing.

In his attempt, however, to show a literal sequence of the mystic steps in the hymns, Father Collins has "oversubtly analyzed" them, committing the error he attributes to Mrs. J. W. Bennett (p. 206); and in his oversimplification of the pattern of the hymns, he errs again as did J. B. Fletcher and Mrs. Bennett, who found the neo-Platonic steps in sequence in the *Fowre Hymnes* (*Mod. Phil.*, VIII [1911], 545, and *Stud. in Phil.*, XXVIII [1931], 18).

As noted by Father Collins, the twin loves—the earthly and the heavenly with their corresponding beauties—are really one, that is, in origin and ultimate, since both are of divine inception. This unity, however, remains too dim for the comprehension of the ordinary layman. In emphasizing this unity in the *Fowre Hymnes*, Father Collins tries to make Spenser a mystic, whereas the poet had his feet on the ground. To any observer and reader of Spenser's poems the twin loves must appear dual; consequently, an artist's presentation of them cannot escape this twoness, since their separation becomes necessary to creative rendition. In order to prove the mystic unity of the hymns, therefore, Father Collins must ignore their essential duality, which has been accepted for a long time.

BERTHA M. KUHN

*University of Washington*

*The Eighteenth Century Background. Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period.* By BASIL WILLEY. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941. Pp. viii + 302. \$3.25.

"I have not presumed to write even an outline 'history' of eighteenth century thought in general," Professor Willey states in his Preface, "but have tried to illustrate the importance, in that century, of the idea of 'Nature' in religion, ethics, philosophy and politics, and in particular to illustrate some stages in that divinization of

'Nature' which culminates in Wordsworth." Any other themes in the book, which deals mainly with English thinkers, are incidental.

The author reveals that the concept of nature, variously construed, served the purposes of primitivist and sophisticate, atheist and theologian, classicist and romanticist, Tory and Jacobin, but that a thread of continuity can be traced through the maze of doctrine. The earlier part of the century was dominated by the scientific synthesis of Galileo, Newton, Descartes, and Locke, and the basic economy of the world was thought to be uniform, static, atomistic, mechanical. The initial effect upon religion was to confirm theism, since Nature as the Great Machine presupposes the Divine Inventor and Mechanic. Hence "Cosmic Toryism," to employ Professor Willey's apt term, became the prevalent form of metaphysical optimism, illustrated, for example, by Soame Jenyns' *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1757). Since Nature was regarded as God's mechanically perfect plan, the *status quo* was conceived to be divinely fixed and unimprovable.

The more critical and dynamic personalities of the century, however, rebelled against a doctrine so smug and yet so hopeless. Men like Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Holbach in France, and Swift, Mandeville, Hume, and Butler in England, each in his way, undermined the Tory Cosmos. Although "the holy alliance between science and religion" persisted in thinkers such as David Hartley and Joseph Priestley, they challenged the existing order with their new doctrine of human perfectibility. Thus an optimism of progress gradually supplanted an optimism of complacency.

The increasing reliance upon instinct, emotion, and "sensibility" constitutes another tendency. "Nature and Reason," Professor Willey points out, "are normally associated in the earlier part of the century, Nature and Feeling in the later." Figures such as Shaftesbury, Hume, Hutcheson, and Burke, not to mention the poets, were instrumental in this shift of opinion. Godwin, as an arch-rationalist in an age of deepening romanticism, was something of an exception, but even he eventually became converted to "the culture of the heart."

Wordsworth, to whom the final chapter is devoted, represents the transition which largely determined the early nineteenth century: the shift from reason to feeling, from the abstract to the concrete, and from revolution to conservatism. The intensity with which he and Coleridge appreciated "Nature," Professor Willey believes, was not merely a consequence of the rejection of the mechanical philosophy, but primarily a result of the "deflection into imaginative channels of their thwarted political ardours." The poets could scarcely have found such healing power in the woods, however, if the eighteenth century had not taught men to look upon the visible universe as the clearest evidence of God.

Professor Willey's survey is so deft and admirable that one hesitates to criticize. One wonders, however, why he omits a chapter

on Rousseau, a key figure in the development of the "idea of nature," whereas he includes one on Holbach and devotes considerable space to such minor, albeit typical, figures as John Ray. Again, one may ask whether the interpretation of Hume, as the defender of feeling and "nature" against reason, is entirely balanced. Hume points out in discussing ethics, for example, that a man's emotional whims and biases should be regulated by intelligence and transformed into a steady and impartial point of view. Professor Willey is inclined to overestimate, I also believe, the influence of Hartley on Wordsworth. Even in the *Lyrical Ballads*, where the Hartleian influence is strongest, Wordsworth is much besides an "associationist poet," and in his later work, he greatly modifies associationism and subordinates it to transcendentalism.

Professor Willey's interpretation would have been somewhat different if he had been thinking mainly of Wordsworth's relation to our own age rather than to the eighteenth century. Glancing back at the French Revolution and men such as Godwin, the author thinks of Wordsworth as reacting against a revolutionary generation and his own early republicanism. There is, however, another way of thinking of the poet that is perhaps more meaningful today. We also are living in a transitional age of war and revolution, and we can begin to discern the emergence of a new "social mind." Representative thinkers such as Whitehead and Dewey have been sketching an "organic conception of the world," which is the basic idea of the emerging socio-cultural synthesis. As Whitehead himself points out in *Science and the Modern World*, Wordsworth anticipates this new *Weltanschauung*: his sense of the reality of concrete quality, process, organicity, creative synthesis, and social interdependence dissociates him from the abstract, individualistic, and mechanical concepts which have, on the whole, dominated not merely the eighteenth century but the last four centuries. In this perspective, Wordsworth appears less closely related to Hartley, less of a reactionary, and more of a harbinger of things to come.

MELVIN RADER

*University of Washington*

*The Later Career of Tobias Smollett.* By LOUIS L. MARTZ. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942. Pp. ix + 213. \$3.00.

Smollett has been one of the most neglected of British novelists, but since the middle 1920's, beginning with Buck's monograph on *Peregrine Pickle* and Noyes's edition of the letters, we have had a series of studies which greatly enlarge our understanding of his career. Yale is the center of this activity. Some of these contributions are as yet unpublished or published only in part: Dr. Martz's

acknowledgments refer to Lewis M. Knapp on "The Final Period of Tobias Smollett," Luella F. Norwood's "Descriptive Bibliography," Rufus Putney's "Lesage and Smollett," and George M. Kahrl's Harvard dissertation, "Travel and the Prose-Fiction of Tobias Smollett, M.D." Martz's own contribution is of the highest value.

The orthodox account of Smollett notes a decline in creative power after *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753), and then, with only slight attention to the labors of the next fifteen years or so, proceeds to view with amazement a last outburst of power in *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). The present study is devoted to the neglected period after 1753; it does not dwell on Smollett's *History of England*, his connections with periodicals, or his translations, but works out fully the significance of his compilations—*A Compendium of Voyages* (1756), *Travels through France and Italy* (1766), and *The Present State of All Nations* (1768-69), with due attention to *The Modern Part of the Universal History* (1759-65). Martz connects these works with a general eighteenth-century movement toward "synthesis," a systematization of knowledge which was called "history" in a broad sense. He shows that Smollett took a more active part in these projects than has been supposed, and that he was at considerable pains to select and organize the best authorities in an increasingly terse and competent style. This editorial efficiency made the *Compendium* one of the most influential and widely imitated travel-collections of the century; it marks the *Travels* as a neat job of general history rather than as a mere display of energetic bad temper; it slackens in *The Present State*, which is nevertheless of great importance for *Humphrey Clinker*. The topical material in *Launcelot Greaves* and the savage political satire of the *Atom* do not fall so easily into line with these works. Martz shows that Smollett's method as an editor of travel-material is to reduce the personal comment and individual coloring of his sources. This in itself would tend to put the result of such work at a remove from the satire and humor of the novelist. In the *Travels* too we can distinguish between the Smollett who copies passages from guidebooks to Nice and Rome and the Smollett who undertakes a grimly humorous account of a traveler's woes.

Yet there can be no doubt that Martz scores a brilliant success with his analysis of *Humphrey Clinker*, and in fifty closely packed pages makes all other accounts of that work not only inadequate but well nigh obsolete. *Clinker* is a "natural result of all the historical materials with which Smollett had been concerned since 1753." Smollett had virtually exhausted the picaresque formula in *Random*, *Pickle*, and *Fathom*, and the difference between *Clinker* and these early works is to be explained largely in terms of the editorial practice of his middle period. In particular, the demonstration of the close relation between *The Present State* and *Clinker* completely changes our conception of Matthew Bramble's travels north of the Tweed. The account of Scotland taken from *The Present*

*State* and wrought into the fabric of the novel is an essential part of a scheme to present travel description "in the popular form of a tour through Great Britain, in which satire on England would serve as a foil for a favorable account of Scotland" (p. 131). Bramble's humorous eccentricity thus becomes in part a technical device for conveying satire of England and praise of Scotland without accepting full responsibility. Lismahago too is to be understood not only as a combination of pedantic and Scottish humors, but as a mouth-piece for the praise of Scotland. The manipulated material in *Clinker* at its best fuses with or is adjusted to highly individual temperament and humor. This given content is a necessary if not sufficient condition for Smollett's best work.

We might easily be tempted to further generalizations about the novelist as compiler. We learn something important about eighteenth-century fiction when we consider that Smollett and Sterne were compilers in a sense in which Richardson and Fielding were not. We understand Scott better when we consider him as the heir of eighteenth-century compilation, and we find that Scott's admiration for Smollett may well have been based on other grounds than mere national pride. The historian of fiction will probably be able to show that the movement toward "synthesis" here studied in relation to Smollett's career and to the intellectual life of the period was also of the highest significance for some of the most important changes that overtook the novel in the late eighteenth century.

ALAN D. MCKILLOP

*The Rice Institute*

*The Mind of a Poet. A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to "The Prelude."* By RAYMOND DEXTER HAVENS. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941. Pp. xviii + 670. \$5.00.

This volume, one of the largest yet devoted to Wordsworth, has two parts. The first, a study of various aspects of Wordsworth's thought, consists of ten rather loosely connected chapters entitled "The Matter-of-factness of Wordsworth," "Passion," "The Ministry of Fear," "Solitude, Silence, Loneliness," "Animism," "Nature," "Anti-Rationalism," "The Mystic Experience," "Religion," and "Imagination." The second is the most detailed and painstaking annotation of *The Prelude* thus far attempted.

Whoever reads Professor Havens' notes must agree that no one has approached the intricate problems of *The Prelude* with greater energy or patience. In an introduction to his commentary he shrewdly describes the limitations of the poem, and reminds us once again of the important but generally neglected truth that *The*

*Prelude* is not an autobiography but a brilliant, though incomplete, account of the growth of a poet's mind. The author then proceeds to a line-by-line study of the poem, explaining his understanding of the relationship of the various parts to the whole, offering interpretations of all the obscure and many of the simpler passages, and pausing frequently to remark upon matters of style. Students of the early Wordsworth will find the comments on Book XI (1850 version) particularly interesting, and all who work on the numerous texts of *The Prelude* will be grateful for Professor Havens' help in using Professor De Selincourt's accurate but difficult *apparatus criticus*.

The faults of the study seem, curiously, to be those which the author discovers in *The Prelude*: (1) uncertainty or diversity of purpose; (2) neglect of chronology; (3) inadequate consideration of the influence of books on Wordsworth's thought; and (4) waste of space on matters either trivial or irrelevant, or both. It is not always clear, for example, whether the book was intended to be a handbook for beginners or a careful synthesis of Wordsworthian scholarship for specialists alone. Undergraduates may be puzzled by the discussion of the mystic experience, and advanced students probably need not be told again that Wordsworth's matter-of-factness caused him not only to keep his eye on the object, but also to record dull detail for its own sake. And one wonders whether any reader will do much with the knowledge that Wordsworth used the word "power" more than five hundred times (p. 46), and that he incorporated in Book XIV of *The Prelude* seven lines composed entirely of monosyllables (p. 311).

The most serious weakness of the book is the neglect of chronology. To ignore chronology in a study of Wordsworth's mind—or any other mind worth studying—is to refuse to define the terms of the subject under investigation. Wordsworth's mind, like everything else in nature, was subject to change. He himself was well aware of this, as the sub-title to *The Prelude* clearly indicates. Accordingly, if confusion is to be avoided, we must, when we refer to Wordsworth's "mind," differentiate between the mind that produced *An Evening Walk*, the mind that created *Tintern Abbey*, and the mind—slightly frayed at the edges—which yielded up the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. It is well enough to hold with Professor Havens that the "sublime and terrible in the external world" impressed Wordsworth most (p. 46), if we mean the Wordsworth who tramped through Switzerland with Robert Jones, but such a generalization will not do for the Wordsworth who remarked in the third book of *The Excursion* that "Mutability is Nature's bane" (v. 458), and who, in his *Guide through the District of the Lakes* . . ., objected to the Alps because they suggested havoc, ruin, encroachment, and decay. To the later Wordsworth the tranquil, not the terrible, was sublime.

This failure to see the need for distinguishing between the various stages of Wordsworth's thought explains perhaps the

author's apparent indifference to Wordsworth's youthful work and to such matters as the French Revolution and the influence of books on the development of Wordsworth's thought in his formative years. This indifference produces unfortunate conclusions. No one who had examined *Descriptive Sketches* and *Guilt and Sorrow* closely would maintain with Aldous Huxley—after first scolding Mr. Huxley for entertaining such an idea (p. 93)—that Wordsworth ignored the violence of nature, nor would he be forced to admit that he could recall no descriptions of storms in Wordsworth's poetry (p. 114). And no one who has given his best thought to Wordsworth's French experience is likely to write on one page that Wordsworth's visit to France was "the most important event in his life . . . the one that did most to develop his interest in humanity" (p. 452), only to suggest on another that Books IX, X, and XI of *The Prelude* are irrelevant because they deal with the French Revolution, which had only a negative influence on Wordsworth's poetry (pp. 279, 289, 493-4). It is doubtful, moreover, whether Professor Havens would have charged Wordsworth with confusing moral and esthetic values in his nature-poetry (pp. 102-3) had he looked a little further into the influence of Hartley and Godwin on Wordsworth's naturalism. In any case, it is certain that *The Excursion*, IV, 1207-1229—a passage written before, not, as Professor Havens supposes, after the summer of 1798 (p. 103 and p. 123, n. 30)—does not say unqualifiedly that "The love of daisies is . . . an infallible proof of virtue" (p. 103). Finally, when the author asserts that there was nothing intellectual about Wordsworth's enjoyment of nature, that "he did not hear the music of humanity in fields and groves" before 1797 and his acquaintance with Coleridge (pp. 94, 103), the author ignores verses written by Wordsworth in 1794 and published in 1940 by Professor De Selincourt in a volume listed by the author in his "Table of Sigla, Abbreviations, Etc." (p. xi).

The moral is that it is perilous to generalize about Wordsworth's mind without first making a thorough study of his early verse and of his indebtedness to such writers as Hartley and Godwin. Had Professor Havens decided to make such a preliminary study, his contribution to our understanding of Wordsworth's mind would have been not only imposing and praiseworthy but also, in the opinion of this reviewer, indispensable.

GEORGE WILBUR MEYER

Western Reserve University

*The Idiom of Poetry.* By FREDERICK A. POTTLE. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1941. Pp. vii + 139. \$2.00.

Max Eastman says of *The Idiom of Poetry*, "I think it is one of the wisest books on literary criticism ever written, and that no one should discuss poetic values again without reading it." This enthusiastic judgment is so absolute in its nature that Mr. Pottle himself would probably deny the imperative. But every student of poetry and criticism will be attracted by the nature of Mr. Pottle's material. He discusses shifts of sensibility, relativism, the critic's responsibility, what poetry really is, and fine poetry. In all phases of his subject he keeps in mind his main thought, that idiom is a way of writing poetry, a way that is moulded and defined by the age that produces it; and therefore each age has its peculiar idiom. To understand that idiom one must know more than the individual poem, but it is doubtful if, with all the knowledge a man may acquire of a past age, he can appreciate the idiom in all of its aesthetic implications.

Since that may be true, Mr. Pottle sets out to defend a critical approach from a relative point of view. He reminds his reader of relativism in science, and argues that if the scientist with his fine opportunity for controlled experiments can arrive at no absolute answer, why should absolutism have any place in the critic's dogma. He discusses this thesis with fine illustrations and in a manner and style that is entirely delightful. His point of view is broad, his appreciation always keen, and his illustrations are treated from a fresh and generous point of view. There is nothing either forbidding or austere in his manner. He is as generous to other critics as he is to the poets he discusses, for he keeps in mind that the critic is forever evaluating his own sensibility and not (except, perhaps, by accident) the true sensibility of the poetry he is studying.

Within the framework of relativism it is still possible to compare, evaluate, know, and understand. He does not believe that relativism must lead to the blind alley of *self*. He would not accept the thesis of Anatole France that the critic can only talk about himself in relation to Shakespeare. The self can become through study and understanding a part of a past age and at least approach a sympathetic appreciation of its poetry. When the critic has understood and admitted his limitation, he has by that act entered the gateway of gardens of poetry; if he moves warily he may enjoy much, and evaluate wisely.

Such a thesis no doubt inspired the enthusiasm of Max Eastman as it must charm all moderns. As a frame of reference it is sound for our age, but the sad truth is that Mr. Pottle himself can accept it only in part. He confesses his limitation but does not seem to realize how unconvincing his whole theme must seem to the reader when a major portion of the ring is broken and the old absolute again raises its sturdy head. I quote from page 32:

I am not a moral relativist, though I cannot convict of logical error any man who chooses to be one. It will be enough if I insist that relativism in physics and in theory of poetry does not imply as a logical consequence, relativism in matters of faith and morals. That is something to be settled by experience, not by a *priori* argument. Is it strange that experience should indicate that some things in the structure of being are fixed and others are not? I subscribe without reservation to a Christian orthodoxy and its attendant moral code, because from participating in the Church's life I have come to believe that its dogmatic pronouncements are *true*; not because man constructed them himself, in the sense that Newton's laws of motion were constructed, but because, to use theological language, they were supernaturally revealed. Religion is for me the fixed center about which other things move.

God has not seen fit "to announce an absolute standard of taste. Theory of poetry does not aspire above relativism."

This will not satisfy either the absolutist or the true relativist. *The Idiom of Poetry* is a charming and interesting little book, but it falls somewhat short of being "one of the wisest books on literary criticism ever written."

SOPHUS KEITH WINTHROP

*University of Washington*

*Annals of the New York Stage. Vol. XIII (1885-1888).* By GEORGE C. D. ODELL. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. Pp. xviii + 723; illus. \$8.75.

As students of the theatre need not be told, the first volume of Professor Odell's monumental work appeared in 1927. Subsequent volumes have appeared almost annually. A striking feature of the series is the steady contraction of the periods covered in the various volumes. Volume I, for example, covered our theatre from its beginnings in the seventeenth century to the year 1798, with a detailed account of performances after 1750. All this required 496 pages. The latest volume, by contrast, devotes 723 pages to a three-year period.

Professor Odell's chronicles are always delightful reading, and this is surprising when one considers the mass of data which it is his business to record. The reason, of course, is that he is a true lover of the theatre and is therefore constantly at pains to re-create its past in lovable guise. Then, too, he has a remarkable sense of humor, and this turns many a naturally dry incident into a pleasant episode.

Volume XIII is vivid and exciting because of the richness of the period it records and also because those years represent a time of great theatrical enthusiasm in the author's own life. From 1885 to 1888 (and for another year as well) Professor Odell was an undergraduate student at Columbia College. He saw many of the productions he is now describing, and his recollected delight in them is highly infectious.

Those were the days of famous theatres in New York City: Daly's, Wallack's, and the Madison Square. They were the days of the greatest stock companies in American history, and among the actors who composed them were such immortals as John Drew, Ada Rehan, Otis Skinner, May Irwin, Nat Goodwin, De Wolf Hopper, Maurice Barrymore, E. H. Sothern, Mrs. Gilbert, Kyrle Bellew, and Rose Coghlan. Among others who headed their own companies were Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Booth, and Richard Mansfield. One notes, too, that on December 12, 1887, Julia Marlowe made her New York debut. Visiting European stars were numerous, and included Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, Sarah Bernhardt, Mrs. Langtry, and Alexander Salvini.

The plays of the period were a curious assortment. Among English playwrights Pinero and Jones were favorites. Many French and German pieces were adapted for American tastes, particularly melodramas. Among native writers those outstanding were William Gillette (*Held by the Enemy*), James A. Herne (*Hearts of Oak*), Bronson Howard (*The Banker's Daughter*, *The Henrietta*), Henry C. De Mille (*The Wife*), David Belasco (*La Belle Russe*), and Edward Harrigan, with his innumerable farces. Mixed with these contemporary works were the immensely popular plays of Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Bulwer-Lytton. Shakespeare, particularly as presented by Augustin Daly with his brilliant stock company, was an indisputable favorite.

One must not convey the impression, however, that this book limits itself to a record of the standard or legitimate stage. On the contrary, Professor Odell is as sweeping in his inclusiveness as a broad definition of the word "theatre" will permit. He gives full attention to opera, vaudeville, burlesque, concerts, dramatic recitals, and minstrel shows, and even finds space for such phenomena as stereopticon lectures, bicycle races and séances. Illustrated travel lectures seem to have been especially popular at the time. It was a great period, too, for light opera. Gilbert and Sullivan pieces were contemporary "hits" and Viennese operettas were rapidly supplanting the previously admired French types of *opera bouffe*.

Considerable space is given over, one finds, to the presentation of plays in foreign languages. Present-day New Yorkers are aware of occasional performances of this sort, but they appear to have been much more frequent in 1886. French, German and Yiddish were the languages chiefly employed.

Professor Odell stated at the outset of his work that his aim was not only to record fully from original sources the events of the New York stage, but also to bring each period to life. Without straying far from the stage door he manages to achieve this aim. In the minutiae of theatrical history we find, thanks to the skillful author's hints, a wealth of human revelation. Natural events that affected the theatre are dealt with, also. An example is the great blizzard of March, 1888.

The author believes, and rightly, in the importance of pictorial records. In this volume we have forty-five pages of photographs, and a typical page contains the portraits of nine actors.

Reviewers of previous volumes of the *Annals* have used large words in their attempts to describe the scope and importance of the work. "Fabulous," "stupendous," "monumental," "immense," "amazing," are a few of these. One cannot hope to go further in this respect, but the present writer can at least approve the adjectives already employed. For it is a plain fact that no man in history has ever achieved a theatrical work of comparable magnitude. When excellence is added to magnitude, the result is worthy of our highest admiration.

Finally, one must reiterate the often expressed hope that Professor Odell finds it possible to prepare many more volumes for the press.

GLENN HUGHES

*University of Washington*

*What's in a Novel.* By HELEN E. HAINES. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. Pp. xiv + 283. \$2.75.

*The Economic Novel in America.* By WALTER FULLER TAYLOR. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1942. Pp. xii + 378. \$4.00.

*The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940.* By WILLIAM C. FRIERSON. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942. Pp. xvi + 333. \$3.00.

*Writers in Crisis. The American Novel Between Two Wars.* By MAXWELL GEISMAR. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942. Pp. xii + 299. \$3.00.

*The Novel and Society, A Critical Study of the Modern Novel.* By N. ELIZABETH MONROE. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941. Pp. x + 282. \$3.00.

Here are five new books on the novel which differ widely in subject-matter, method, and value. Miss Haines ranges over the whole field of contemporary fiction; Miss Monroe, though considering far fewer writers, still cuts through national boundaries to find them. Frierson and Geismar confine themselves, respectively, to a "period" in British and American fiction; Taylor, working in the American field, further narrows his range to one type. Miss Haines is purely the informative writer. Taylor is the dispassionate scholar; Frierson's scholarship is streaked with prejudice. Geismar and Miss Monroe are both evangelists. The Taylor is easily the best book, the Frierson much the worst.

Miss Haines is a librarian. Inspired by Bernard DeVoto's saying—"The mass and tension of modern fiction have opened up areas of experience, states of consciousness, and a variety of theme if not of emotions that the novel did not deal with before"—she has written to dispel the mists of ignorance and prejudice as to *What's in a Novel*. Time was when Sir Walter Scott published *Waverley* anonymously because it was not fitting that a Clerk of Session should write novels, and when Julia Ward Howe's "Cousin" Nelly Greene stifled her desire to read *The Schönberg-Cotta Family* upon being informed that it was a work of the imagination. Today the novel is the art-form as characteristic of modern civilization as the now dead epic was characteristic of the Homeric Greeks or the dying drama of the Elizabethans. Meyer Levin wrote *Citizens* as fiction rather than history "because the form of the novel appeared to permit me the most effective interpretation of events and the conditions which gave rise to them." Fiction can inform and instruct with the best of utilitarian literature, and because man is more than a fact-assimilating machine, it can stimulate his imagination and satisfy his hunger for creation as utilitarian literature never can.

Miss Haines attempts little criticism, but what she has is in general thoroughly competent, one exception being her reference to Mary Johnston, whom she evidently knows only by her early sword-and-cloak romances, not by the later, far more significant, work. She absurdly overpraises *The Trojan Horse*, by Christopher Morley; she calls John Brophy's *Gentleman of Stratford* faithful to the known facts of Shakespeare's life!; she attempts a discussion of our fourth-dimensional novels with no reference to J. W. Dunne. But in view of the astonishing range of her book such matters are hardly worth mentioning. She describes every conceivable type of subject-matter and every conceivable kind of technical experimentation with which modern novelists have concerned themselves; she even has chapters on "Fiction from Latin America" and "The Lure of Crime." I know no other book on the modern novel which gives so much information or is so successful in whetting the appetite for reading. Not even the impossible daunts Miss Haines; she actually tries to teach club-women how to review a novel!

Professor Taylor's book on *The Economic Novel in America* is the result of a study of the 250 novels on economic problems published in America between 1870 and 1901. (It is delightful to know that the very first was written by the author of *The Gates Ajar*.) Mark Twain, Hamlin Garland, Edward Bellamy, William Dean Howells, and Frank Norris are considered at length, and there are chapters on "The Environment" and "The Lesser Novelists." In conclusion the aesthetic values of the Economic Novel are considered along with the effect of the use of economic materials on the novel form.

The net result is "a strenuous disagreement with certain widely held ideas about the complacency and cultural enervation of the

so-called Gilded Age," the condemnation of which by recent critics is found to rest "on no groundwork of exact historical study, but, at most, upon general unsystematized observations." It is Mr. Taylor's view—his demonstrable and demonstrated view—that "our post-Civil-War literature treats, with seriousness and vigor, precisely the same problems that occupied the great Victorian social critics from Carlyle through William Morris—the problem of assimilating into a previously existent humane culture the disruptive forces of capitalistic industrialism. . . ."

The range and extent of Howells' work in the economic novel have never before, I think, been so impressively set forth; indeed the chapter on Howells amounts to a splendid rehabilitation. "But the only American author to intervene publicly in behalf of the Chicago anarchists was not timid, and the man who possessed the perfectly integrated body of ideas which we have just analyzed was not confused." Unlike Howells, Garland rejected all forms of collectivism, and accepted the Gospel according to Henry George. Mr. Taylor does not deny that the growth of Garland's creative personality was arrested early in his life, or that he was unable "to outgrow his agrarian conditioning and prejudices," but unlike his predecessors he does not scold him for these things, for he knows that the shift was an inevitable part of the decline of the Populist movement, and that it had to come along with the improvement of economic conditions in the late nineties and the deflection of protest into another field which was occasioned by American imperialistic expansion.

The chapter on Mark Twain could hardly be better. The *Connecticut Yankee* was a "tremendous indictment of social injustice," which "reaches at last the finality of profoundest tragic drama." It is true that Mark Twain had no "scientific or philosophical method"; it is even true that there was "a lack of perfect integration in his character." But for the Van Wyck Brooks mythology Mr. Taylor can find no evidence whatever. Like his contemporaries (including Bellamy), Mark Twain accepted the machine; as a satirist he attacked not the machine itself but the abuses which it had accentuated; as a democrat he insisted upon the protection of man from economic abuses. When imperialism raised its ugly head towards the end of his life, his "materialism" came into conflict with his democracy, and he had no hesitation in making his choice.

We had need of Professor Taylor's book. We needed too a book on the recent English novel. This latter need still exists, for Professor Frierson has not met it.

*The English Novel in Transition, 1885-1940*, fails primarily because of the narrow range of its author's sympathies. Mr. Frierson's is a type of mind which is now fortunately nearly extinct among scientists but which all too often survives in so-called professors of the humanities who like to think of themselves as wonderfully abreast of the latest thing when as a matter of fact they are actually

belated Victorians. Mr. Frierson can see nothing in his period except the growth and triumph of "scientific materialism." I would not for a moment deny that he is entitled to his creed. But in the period of which he has chosen to write it could not but have resulted in the distortion of many writers and the omission of many more.

His method is unfortunate also. His book is scrappy; some sections are little more than a series of jottings. He has chopped up the work of various novelists, to arrange it under various headings which mean far more to him than they will ever mean to his readers and which, in many cases, meant absolutely nothing to the writers themselves. In some cases, therefore, one finds nowhere a complete, well-rounded survey of the writer and his work.

Mr. Frierson permits himself the amazing statement that during the latter part of Edward VII's reign scientific materialism so pervaded the public mind "that the mass of new novels was written by and for scientific materialists." Later he remarks that during the postwar years "scientific materialism induced a state of mind that was not merely critical but skeptical." Evidently the scientific materialists among the Edwardians did not get so far as skepticism! We are told of Richard Whiteing that he "is no naturalist," and in the next sentence we read that his view of things is "generally a naturalistic one." Mr. Frierson thinks three-volume novels began with Dickens; he believes Charles Reade was "deferential to the proprieties"—(somebody should tell him that *A Terrible Temptation* so shocked Reade's contemporaries that one critic referred to it as "this mass of brothel garbage")—and he quite understates the change in the novel which came with George Eliot, Meredith, and Hardy. He seriously asks us to believe that George Moore succeeded in making us feel the convent atmosphere in *Evelyn Innes* "perhaps because the windows of his study overlooked the cloisters of a nunnery"! Finally, I would point out that the fact that Storm Jameson is Mrs. Guy Chapman and Elizabeth Bowen Mrs. Alan Cameron does not make them "Mrs. Jameson" and "Mrs. Bowen."

Mr. Frierson has some good material on Hubert Crackenthorpe and "The Maupassant School in England," and on Morrison, Whiteing, and others, whom he considers under "The Reaction Against Dickens." (The reaction itself is not clearly shown.) He performs a good service in considering these and other neglected writers more lengthily than they have been considered in some time. One of his sections is headed "An Interpretation of Periodical Comment." This heading might have been used again and again. All this material is useful, and we are in Mr. Frierson's debt for having collected it. No doubt such things will keep his book alive until a better one appears. One hopes that his student-readers will not take him too seriously as a guide, and that his successor will profit by his mistakes.

Mr. Geismar's *Writers in Crisis* is much better than a cursory examination might indicate. The reader is likely to be prejudiced by the Table of Contents, for while Ring Lardner, Ernest Hemingway,

John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, and John Steinbeck are American novelists of the thirties, they certainly are not "The American Novel." Mr. Geismar explains that, studying "a few key figures," he wishes to show "the shifting directions, the creative conflicts, and social impact of the rest of our writers," which, of course, cannot be done except insofar as the experience of the rest of our writers has coincided with that of the "key figures."

Mr. Geismar does not quite recover from this false start. Though he steers splendidly clear of all Marxian shortcuts, he still over-stresses the relationship between the writer and society. But he has much to say that is worth saying, and even if he strains himself sometimes, he generally says it well.

His thesis is that "The dazzling materialism of the American twenties led, among authors at least, to a spiritual frustration. By contrast, the social crisis of the thirties brought to the writers a spiritual positive based, as it were, on the actual collapse of their society."

This does not at all mean that Mr. Geismar is a war-monger of the Archibald MacLeish stripe. On the contrary he declares, "Everywhere today we destroy each other in the catastrophic illusion that we must in order to gain those necessities of life which lie useless around us. . . . Our struggle is no longer against nature, but ourselves. We compete, not against brutal necessity, but our own brute instincts." Yet he can find no despair in his heart; he believes that we are standing on the threshold of a new age.

Mr. Geismar traces the emergence of his "spiritual positive" most successfully in Hemingway and Dos Passos. Lardner died in despair, and Faulkner, the Southern chauvinist-aristocrat, is still wedded to his frustrations. Toward Steinbeck, Mr. Geismar is rather condescending. His poorest and most subjective chapter is the one on Lardner. Here he has apparently tried to duplicate in little *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*.

When all reservations are made, it must be said that Mr. Geismar has written a book for which he deserves our gratitude, and that we must await his promised study of the twenties with much interest.

Miss Monroe shares Mr. Geismar's conviction of the necessity of a "spiritual positive," but she is much surer where to find it; it lies waiting for us in the Roman Catholic Church. *The Novel and Society* has been somewhat abused by the reviewers (as its author must have known it would be); let it here be stated emphatically that though Miss Monroe is a dogmatist—I am using the word in no invidious sense—she is neither a bigot nor a prig. (Some of her critics have been both.) That life cannot be described greatly unless it is lived greatly is a commonplace of criticism, which the history of all literature stands ready to sustain. That the novel has suffered from the confused ethical and philosophical conditions of our time seems to me equally indisputable. And if it is not true, as Miss Monroe says, that the Christian religion "is the only philosophy man has

known that gives eternal significance to the individual," this reviewer would like to know what the others are. Indeed, he is willing to go farther yet: though he is not a Catholic, he is willing to grant that if some one form of the Christian faith is to be taken as a standard in such a book as this, the Catholic form is best, for the simple reason that it alone ever occupied the central position in western civilization.

Miss Monroe's separate chapters deal with Sigrid Undset, Selma Lagerlöf, Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, Virginia Woolf, and Willa Cather, whom she has chosen because, different as they are, she thinks they have all succeeded in preserving human values in a confused age.

Naturally Madame Undset, the great Catholic novelist of our time, is the one she values most, though I do not think her chapter on Undset the best in the book. It is repetitive. The constant eulogy wearis. And Miss Monroe has difficulty in making the non-medieval novels so significant as she would like. Miss Cather, though not a Catholic, is congenial to all Catholic critics. Selma Lagerlöf, the Protestant, disarms by her natural, unforced goodness. In Edith Wharton and Ellen Glasgow, Miss Monroe finds much to take exception to, but she has been deeply moved by them, and she is at her best in writing about them. Briefly she sees them, Mrs. Wharton especially, as great writers whose growth has been restricted by the non-spiritual character of the society in which they lived.

There remains Virginia Woolf, and here no intelligent critic could fail to find anarchic tendencies. But it is relevant to the just assessment of Miss Monroe's capacity as a critic that Virginia Woolf herself should have felt as strongly as Miss Monroe does that the modern novel had been conditioned adversely by the chaotic state of the modern mind. Daughter of the great Victorian agnostic, Sir Leslie Stephen, Mrs. Woolf did not love the world of crumbling values in which her lot was cast; she looked back enviously to the days of faith. "To believe that your impressions hold good for others," she wrote, "is to be released from the cramp and confinement of personality. It is to be free, as Scott was free, to explore with a vigor which still holds us spell-bound the great world of adventure and romance." Some time, she hoped, the great days might return. Until then the honest writer could only give himself to "the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure."

In closing I will permit myself one general criticism, and it applies quite as strongly to every other book on my list except Professor Taylor's as it does to Miss Monroe's. Taylor, though making, in a sense, a sociological approach to literature, never confuses social and aesthetic values; Mark Twain's work has permanent importance, he points out, not because of his views on economic problems but because in it "an immensely powerful creative force ministers to . . . [the] central and enduring psychological needs of the race." I do not know whether or not Mr. Geismar is responsible for his

"blurb," but it would be difficult to find a more wrong-headed statement than that "The greater a writer is, the more he is driven to writing—directly or indirectly—about the trials of his time." The greater the writer is, on the contrary, the more does he transcend his time, the closer does he come to the treatment of universal values. Miss Haines declares that "It is time that critics and educators revise the familiar dogma of literary criticism that the values of fiction are purely aesthetic . . . and give recognition to its practical values of exposition and information." What is impractical about aesthetic values? Miss Haines has written a good book in a bad cause. Over against her pronouncement I should like to place the wise words of Henry James: "The content and the 'importance' of a work of art are in fine wholly dependent on its *being* one: outside of which all prate of its representative character, its meaning and its bearing, its morality and humanity are an impudent thing."

If we go any farther than we have gone already toward obscuring the truth that the prime function of the novel is not to destroy war, settle the Negro problem, establish industrial democracy, or save our souls, but to give aesthetic pleasure, the novel will not destroy war, settle the Negro problem, establish industrial democracy, or save our souls. It will be dead.

EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

*University of Washington*

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